

AN EVALUATION OF THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT UNIT

RESEARCHED FOR
**EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT
PROGRAMME**

BY THE
COMMUNITY AGENCY FOR SOCIAL ENQUIRY

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| | |
|--|----|
| Executive Summary | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Evaluation Background and Methodology | 1 |
| Brief Herstory of the Unit | 2 |
| WEU Training Programme | 2 |
| WEU-Training Implementation | 2 |
| Challenges and Problems in Implementation | 4 |
| Recommendations | 4 |
| Conclusion | 5 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| Background of the Evaluation | 7 |
| Brief Herstory of the Unit | 7 |
| Structure of the Report | 8 |
| Evaluation Methodology | 9 |
| Context | 11 |
| Structural context: Parliament | 11 |
| <i>Speakers' Forum</i> | 11 |
| Joint Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women (<i>QoL</i>) | 11 |
| <i>Parliamentary Women's Group (PWG)</i> | 12 |
| <i>The European Union Parliament Support Programme (EUPSP)</i> | 12 |
| <i>Other bodies responsible for training</i> | 13 |
| Training Environment | 13 |
| Training culture | 15 |
| Gender | 16 |
| Internal Structure of WEU | 18 |
| Staff | 18 |
| Task team | 19 |
| Women's Caucus | 20 |
| EUPSP liaison officers | 22 |
| Training Partnerships | 23 |
| Documents guiding the WEU | 25 |
| Training In Different Provinces | 30 |
| Training Experiences Of Mps And Mpls | 34 |
| Service Providers | 41 |
| Other Aspects Of Training | 47 |
| Needs and Competency Analyses | 52 |
| Training Differentiation | 54 |
| Addressing core training issues | 56 |
| Complementary Programmes to Training | 58 |
| Other Similar Programmes | 59 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 62 |
| WEU Documents | 62 |

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Other Documents | 62 |
| Appendix 3..... | 64 |
| CASE INTERVIEWS | 64 |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The first part of this executive summary provides information on the background of the evaluation and its methodology, while the second part contains information on the “herstory” of the Unit. The second part of the document is arranged in the following sections:

- The first section covers the programmes that the WEU runs. This section describes the nature and content of the WEU's work. It outlines the extent to which WEU has been able to implement its programme.
- The second section discusses the challenges that the WEU faces in implementing its programme in different provinces.
- The last section provides recommendations as to how the WEU can improve its operations.

The full report includes an extended discussion of the structures that work with the WEU. This aspect is not included in the executive summary.

EVALUATION BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The second WEU agreement between SIDA and the Speakers' Forum provided that an evaluation of the Unit would be conducted towards the end of the funding period. The evaluation would assess the achievements of the Unit, as well as the challenges it faced. The Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) was thus commissioned by the WEU to conduct an evaluation of its training programmes and other activities.

Researchers from CASE conducted 12 in-depth interviews with parliamentarians, all but one of whom were women. The parliamentarians were selected from Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape Legislatures. The interviewees were chosen according to the number of training WEU workshops they had attended, with the aim of including fairly active parliamentarians and non-active parliamentarians. The other selection criterion was the nature of the constituencies the parliamentarians served, in order to ensure coverage of rural areas.

CASE interviewed most of the chairpersons of the provincial women's caucuses. Additional interviews were conducted with people who had been involved with WEU. These included a former staff-person of SIDA, office-bearers in the legislatures and representatives of organisations who had facilitated training for the WEU. A few of the women parliamentarians selected for interviews were difficult to find, as they either cancelled meetings or did not respond to messages.

Another method of data collection used was a documentary review of WEU internal reports and externally-generated documents. We also conducted a brief strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis with chairpersons of the women's caucuses.

BRIEF HERSTORY OF THE UNIT

The WEU was formed in 1997 to provide induction and specialised training for women parliamentarians. In its work, the WEU was mandated to provide training for all women parliamentarians in national and provincial legislatures. This training would occur across party political lines. The first tranche of funding amounted to SEK 750 000, much of which was still unused by 1999. This resulted in funders being hesitant to continue the funding. However, after discussions, the unspent funds were added to the SEK 2,25 million granted for the second phase of funding. This money provided for the second phase of implementation of training programmes by the WEU. The evaluation focused on the second phase.

WEU TRAINING PROGRAMME

The initial focus of the Unit's training programme was determined by a needs analysis of women parliamentarians conducted during the period of the first agreement, in 1998. Areas of training as identified by women parliamentarians themselves were refined into three key areas during the second phase of funding, namely:

- *Policy and Legislative analysis*
- *Budget process and budget through a gender lens, and*
- *Personal and leadership skill.*

These three foci were developed after the WEU had gone through a process of developing a logical framework, operationalising it into a workplan and hosting two strategic planning workshops with key role-players. In 2002, after a national workshop, the WEU added "gender mainstreaming and understanding gender" as a further area of training.

Provinces vary in the extent to which they have implemented the training workshops that the WEU funds. Some have been very active, while others are struggling. Amongst the top performing provinces are KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Eastern Cape. Weaker provinces include the Free State, Western Cape and the national parliament. In the latter institution, no WEU training has taken place. Informants provided different reasons for under-performance. These are explored more in the next section.

WEU-TRAINING IMPLEMENTATION

KwaZulu-Natal

This province has been able to implement training in all areas outlined in the logical framework of the WEU, as well as some additional areas. They have undergone training on

the budget, on personal and leadership skills, on writing and public speaking, and on policy formulation. They have also had training in understanding gender. The province hosted the high-level cross-provincial “Gender Agenda” conference held in August 2001.

Gauteng

Besides undergoing training in legislative and policy analysis, constituency outreach, the budget, understanding gender and gender mainstreaming, the province also benefited from the WEU’s funding of a lunch for an international women's day event in 2001.

Eastern Cape

This province has been particularly innovative in respect of the type and form of training they would like the WEU to fund in the future. They have had workshops on local government restructuring, budget analysis, legislative process and financial management. For the future, they have submitted a proposal to the WEU for formalised and accredited training. The WEU indicated that they could not support this proposal.

Limpopo

This province has conducted three training workshops; two of them being on gender issues, namely understanding gender and mainstreaming gender. The third training workshop focused on personal and leadership skills.

Free State

The Free State would have had their training in understanding gender in April 2002, if the workshop had not been cancelled due to poor turnout. To date, the Free State has only been able to conduct one training workshop, on personal and leadership skills.

Western Cape

Like the Free State, the Western Cape has only been able to implement one training workshop. This involved budgetary training in 2001.

Northern Cape

The Northern Cape women parliamentarians have received training on the budget process and understanding gender. The WEU also facilitated training on the Public Finance Management Act, through a training organisation called APAC¹.

North West

This province has had training on the women's budget, understanding gender and personal finance.

¹ APAC-Association of Public Accounts Committees- is a skills training organisation housed in the Western Cape legislature.

Mpumalanga

After a training proposal on protocol and etiquette training for the wives of MECs was turned down, Mpumalanga women parliamentarians have received training on understanding gender, leadership skills and the budget and budgeting process.

National parliament

There has been no WEU activity at national level in terms of training. The only engagement that the WEU has had with the national parliament was its funding of a lunch for the international court of women.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION

Various factors determine the uptake of the WEU programme within provinces. Among the inhibiting factors to the uptake of WEU training are the Unit's lack of visibility in the legislatures, and difficulties in dealing with implementing structures such as the European Union Parliamentary Support Programme (EUPSP) and women's caucuses.

In terms of the EUPSP, the liaison officers within all legislatures have been mandated to assist in co-ordinating and implementing the WEU training workshops. However, not all officers undertake this responsibility to the same extent.

In terms of the women's caucus, because the caucus in each province is a key implementing body, the Unit has to deal with whatever problems a particular caucus faces in its legislature. Women's caucuses enjoy different levels of recognition depending on the legislature in which they are situated. In some provinces, caucuses have the status of a standing committee, and are allocated time, a budget, and administrative support. Other caucuses function almost outside the formal structures of the legislature. They may then struggle to find the time and resources to plan and implement the WEU training programmes.

The training environment in the legislatures is not an easy one. The difficulties of engaging are heightened by the fact that the WEU operates from a remote office. But WEU is not the only training provider which encounters such problems. An evaluation of EUPSP training noted that "neither parliament nor any provincial legislature appears to have completed a systematic needs or competency analysis" (HSRC et al 2002:1). In the absence of this, most of the training occurs on an ad hoc and non-systematised manner. This presents very real challenges and difficulties. Perhaps because of a plethora of uncoordinated training, some of the parliamentarians who were interviewed remembered very little about the training workshops that they had attended.

RECOMMENDATIONS*Needs Analysis and Competency Analysis*

The needs analysis commissioned by the WEU in 1998 was useful in charting the way forward for the Unit. However, needs change over time. A once-off needs analysis is thus inadequate. Repeated needs assessments are especially necessary for a unit such as the WEU which is remote in terms of physical location and presence. In addition to providing useful information, conducting a needs analysis could contribute to the visibility of the Unit within the legislatures. Further, it would be a step towards self-assessment by the Unit and its target group, in that women parliamentarians would be required to reflect repeatedly on their own competencies and development.

Training differentiation

As in other evaluations of training of parliamentarians, this evaluation revealed complaints about a lack of differentiation in the training. Parliamentarians suggested, in particular, that training should be differentiated according to level, and also according to topic. In respect of level, there was a suggestion that training should be organised in elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. This would ensure that parliamentarians attend workshops that are suited to their needs and levels of competency. In respect of topic, one suggestion is to organise cross-provincial workshops to which parliamentarians sitting on specific portfolio committee are invited. These workshops would assist the parliamentarians in understanding the gender issues related to the portfolio concerned.

The provision of specialised training would be facilitated if the WEU developed a systematic list of training service providers with the required level of specialisation. The proposed database of training providers should include details on the content of their training, materials, methods of training, experience and fees. It should include an indication as to whether the trainers have a background in gender.

The provision of more targeted training would also require that the WEU brief training providers on the different levels of skills that members have, as well as the particular situation in a legislature.

Complementary programmes to Training

Many interviewees felt that the WEU should complement its training programme with other programmes related to training, such as advocacy support in matters of gender. Some felt that it could provide assistance in community development, for example by assisting parliamentarians to assist people in their communities with skills development and income-generation. The WEU would need to decide which of the various suggestions fall within its mandate.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the evaluation revealed that a range of stakeholders were pleased with what the WEU represented and what it had done. One outsider who worked closely with the WEU

stated that "My sense is that there's a lot of respect for the WEU not based on the training, just on that they're there and this is the unit that can take care of their needs."

The evaluation suggests that often, when the WEU has not delivered as much as originally hoped, this is due to external factors. In particular, the highly political situation of the legislatures, and party in-fighting, often make delivery difficult. Further, parliamentarians' attendance at workshops is not as good as it could be. Parliamentarians themselves attribute the problems to their overload of work.

Overall, the WEU has done well in meeting the terms of the agreement and the framework agreed upon with SIDA. In most provinces, the WEU is well on its way to having provided training on all the identified topics. In some provinces, the WEU has achieved more than this. Among virtually all informants there was agreement that the Unit is serving an important and necessary function.

Nevertheless, there are some areas in which the WEU could improve its performance. The WEU had focused on the financial and logistical aspects of its task, but paid less attention to the pedagogical aspects. We hope that this evaluation will assist the WEU to address this aspect of its operation.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION

The Women's Empowerment Unit (WEU) was established in 1997 to enhance the participation of women in the national parliament and the nine provincial legislatures. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) supported the Unit from the start. The original agreement was extended in 2000 to cover a further period ending mid-2002. The agreement provided that an evaluation would be conducted towards the end of the period to assess the achievements of the Unit, and the challenges faced. In early March, the WEU commissioned the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) to conduct an evaluation of their training programmes and other activities. This document contains CASE's evaluation report.

BRIEF HERSTORY OF THE UNIT

The WEU was formed in 1997 to provide induction and specialized training of women parliamentarians.² In its work, the WEU was mandated to provide training for women parliamentarians in national and provincial legislatures. The training would be targeted at women from all parties.

All descriptions of the Unit note that the WEU provides training. A 1999 publication by various gender organizations notes that the WEU "will offer comprehensive training to new MPs and MPLs after the 1999 elections." (CGE, 1999:25) More generally, it describes the WEU as a project of the speakers' Forum that "aims to identify and address specific factors which hinder women from participating fully in the law making process." (CGE, 1999:25) Many sources also describe aims and functions beyond training. For example, the Unit sees itself as a conduit to facilitate a partnership between men and women in the legislatures to ensure the attainment of gender equality. It also aims to ensure institutional transformation of the legislatures for gender equality. The WEU sees its overall objective as one of "empowerment for women legislators for gender equality." (WEU logical framework, 2000)

The establishment of a WEU was proposed in the appraisal mission that eventually led to the establishment of the larger European Union Parliamentary Support Programme (EUPSP). When it became clear that funding for the larger programme would be delayed, the national speaker and SIDA agreed that the WEU would be funded separately. This separation was advantageous in that it got the programme off the ground more speedily than might otherwise

² We use the word "parliamentarian" in this report to avoid using the more correct, but cumbersome, "member of the provincial legislature (MPL) or member of parliament (MP)". National representatives are correctly termed "parliamentarians". In most provincial legislatures, "member of the provincial legislature" (MPL) would be the correct term. However, at least one province – Western Cape – has styled its legislature as a "parliament".

have happened. It also had some disadvantages. One interviewee felt that “it was as if this belonged to EUPSP but the umbilical cord had been cut.”

It is generally acknowledged that the Unit experienced severe problems in the first funding phase. The first tranche of funding amounted to SEK 750 000 (approximately R600 000). The audit of 1999 revealed a retained income of over R600 000 due to delays in completing the needs analysis (Marks et al, 1998) which would inform subsequent training. Funders were, at first, hesitant about continuing to fund the project. As one informant told us, “The organisation was dead and the funder was ready to pull out.” A key internal informant noted that “we performed badly as a unit up until 1999, so we had to be very focused [about the new plans]”. After some discussion, the proposal for a further period was approved. The unspent funds from the first tranche were then added to the SEK 2,25m granted as a second tranche. As noted above, this evaluation focuses on activities during the second phase of funding.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

First the reports outlines the methodology that was used for the evaluation. It then describes the herstory of the Women's Empowerment Unit. The next section describes the context within which the unit functions, in terms of the structures and the environment. Subsequent sections outline the contexts and environments, the cultures, operations of the unit in relation to other similar organisations and contexts. This is done with a focus on the interviews and documentary reviews of the evaluation. The last two sections provide recommendations and conclusions by delineating other ways of operation.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation focused on activity in the nine provincial legislatures, as these were the main locus of activity during the second tranche of funding.

Researchers from CASE conducted in-depth interviews with women parliamentarians from the Gauteng, Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal legislatures and the national parliament. All but one of the parliamentarians interviewed were women. Four parliamentarians were selected in each location. The interviewees were chosen according to the number of WEU training workshops and other activities they had attended. The aim was to include both those who were fairly active in activities of the WEU, and women who had not participated at all. We also aimed to get a spread across parties. A standard in-depth interview guideline was used for the interviews.

Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape were selected as the main site areas for interviews. This was done so as to fit in with both to the time allocated for the evaluation, and the allocated budget. The selected provinces are to some extent unrepresentative in that they are more urban than the country as a whole. However, KwaZulu-Natal, in particular, and Western Cape to a lesser extent, include significant rural areas. In order to ensure representivity, the selection of parliamentarians for interviews focused on parliamentarians serving rural constituencies.

Most provinces have women's caucuses in their legislatures. These are discussed further below. The plan was to interview all women's caucus chairs at the inter-provincial meeting held in Johannesburg in mid-April. Unfortunately, two caucus chairs did not attend the meeting, namely, those from Mpumalanga and Free State. CASE attempted to follow up the interview with the Mpumalanga chair telephonically, but this attempt failed. The women's caucus chair was traveling between constituencies and could not make time.

Surprisingly, despite physical location, it was more difficult to secure interviews with the planned number of parliamentarians in Gauteng than in the other two selected provinces as the selected interviewees repeatedly changed the meeting times. This problem is not unique to this particular evaluation. Other initiatives which require interviews with parliamentarians report similar difficulties in obtaining interviews, in that parliamentarians do not respond to messages, scheduled appointments are canceled, or parliamentarians simply do not arrive. The difficulties provided evidence for the researchers of the sorts of challenges the Unit must face in setting up group training events.

Additional interviews were conducted with people who had been involved in some way with the WEU. These included national parliamentarians, current WEU staff members, WEU task

team members, office-bearers within the legislatures, chairpersons of the women's caucuses, an ex-SIDA staff-member, representatives of organizations that facilitated training for the Unit, and representatives of other organizations that are involved in similar projects. A list of people interviewed is attached as an appendix. CASE was also able to draw on its own experience as a training provider and workshop facilitator for the WEU.

The report includes numerous quotes from the interviews. For the most part, we do not include the source of the quote. This approach is adopted so as to preserve confidentiality.

In addition to interviews, CASE undertook a documentary review. Documents reviewed included previous assessments of related programmes and activities, training reports, workshop and conference reports, strategic planning documents, women's caucus reports, task team reports and the Unit's logical framework. Unfortunately, as discussed below, the WEU was not able to provide reports on all training facilitated by it.

CASE also used the opportunity of the meeting of women's caucus chairpersons to conduct individual interviews with the chairpersons and to facilitate a small organisational analysis exercise with the group. Unfortunately, participants had not been adequately briefed as to what was planned, and many had changed their travel arrangements so as to leave early. The group exercise thus had to be conducted in less than an hour.

CONTEXT

STRUCTURAL CONTEXT: PARLIAMENT

The WEU functions within a structure that is complex in its arrangements and functions. Parliament, as the law-making body of the country or province, is divided into sub-structures that perform different functions. Some further structures work in or with the legislature, but are independent of it to a greater or lesser extent. The WEU, Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) and Provincial Parliamentary Programme (PPP) are examples of such relatively autonomous bodies. Most structures are hierarchically organized. The WEU is accountable to certain structures, and collaborates with others that have similar areas of operation. The following paragraphs briefly describes some of the more important structures which have an impact on the WEU's work, and the Unit's relationship with each of them. All the structures are meant to collaborate with the WEU on gender mainstreaming³ within the legislatures.

SPEAKERS' FORUM

The Speakers' Forum is a committee composed of speakers and deputy speakers presiding in the national parliament and nine provincial legislatures. The WEU, as stipulated in the funding agreement with SIDA, is a sub-structure of the Speakers' Forum. As a sub-committee of the Speakers' Forum, the Unit is accountable to it and must report to it about progress and challenges. Reporting to the Speakers' Forum happens quarterly, through a task team member. The Speakers' Forum, on its side, is tasked with assisting with the implementation of the WEU's programmes. Currently, the Unit falls under the dynamic leadership of the Deputy Speaker of Limpopo Province, Koti Nyama.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND STATUS OF WOMEN (*QoL*)

This structure includes both male and female members of national parliament, although it is dominated by women. It includes members from all political parties. It includes members from both the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Province (NCOP). The QoL was initially set up as an ad hoc committee in 1996 to monitor the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The committee received permanent status in

³ Gender mainstreaming means integrating a gender analysis into every part of government's work – policy development, laws, budget allocation, programme implementation and monitoring – to ensure equal outcomes for women and men, boys and girls.

1998. Over the last few years, the committee has focused on three key areas - gender violence, HIV/AIDS, and women and poverty.

In terms of the conception of the national gender machinery represented in “South Africa’s National Policy Framework for Women’s empowerment And Gender Equality”⁴, there should be QoL committees at provincial as well as national levels. Some of the provinces have been able to establish a QoL committee. In other provinces, the women’s caucuses are still fighting for the establishment of such a structure.

PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN'S GROUP (PWG)

The parliamentary women's group in the national parliament is conceived as a platform on which women parliamentarians from all political parties can create a dialogue between themselves and civil society. This platform is also intended to ensure that parliamentary structures are women-friendly and to promote lobbying around key legislation that impacts on women. The PWG is not an official structure of parliament, in the sense that it is not provided for in the parliamentary timetable and budget. The PWG does not exist at provincial level, but has its equivalent in the women’s caucuses which exist in the majority of the provinces. It is, in fact, often referred to as the women’s caucus. The provincial caucuses are discussed further under WEU structures below.

THE EUROPEAN UNION PARLIAMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME (EUPSP)

As noted, the WEU was a “child” – indeed a premature one – of the EUPSP. The European Union, in a 1996 agreement with the Speakers’ Forum, instituted the EUPSP to support the implementation of democracy through the legislatures in South Africa. The programme seeks “to ensure good governance and stable democracy by strengthening the role of the legislatures, both national and provincial, and supporting them in their efforts to carry out their constitutional obligations.”⁵ As such the goals of the programme are to:

1. provide an efficient support structure and service for Parliament;
2. increase parliamentary skills and knowledge; and
3. Increase the participation of women MPs and MPLs.

It is the last of these three goals, or “result areas” in the EUPSP terminology, for which the WEU is responsible in terms of implementation.

⁴ See appendix 1.

⁵ www.eupsp.org.za

The EUPSP has been involved in capacitating all legislatures infrastructurally, as well as building the capacity of members and their support staff through training. The programme is present in all nine legislatures, as well as in the National Assembly and NCOP. This presence initially took the form of a contracted EUPSP liaison officer. In some legislatures the work has been incorporated into the function of existing staff.

The EUPSP's activities include training of members of the legislatures. This happens in parallel to WEU training. The EUPSP also, in 1999, commissioned CASE to conduct research into the participation of women in the legislative process. The research looked beyond training to the institutional changes required to assist women parliamentarians to participate more effectively and to ensure that the interests of the majority of women are addressed by the legislative institutions. (Budlender et al, 1999)

Like the WEU, the EUPSP falls under the Speakers' Forum. However, representatives of the EUPSP are allowed to sit at the Speakers Forum meetings, while this is not the case for the WEU.

OTHER BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAINING

In each legislature, the Human Resources department, overseen by a committee of the legislature, is responsible, amongst other things, for the training of members. Other committees within the legislatures may also undertake training of members who sit in those committees. Finance and public accounts committees in the legislatures, in particular, have organised a number of training sessions.

TRAINING ENVIRONMENT

Being a parliamentarian presents various challenges. One of the biggest of these challenges could be termed "vocational" in the sense of parliamentarians needing to access the skills and knowledge that will assist them in the execution of their assigned roles and responsibilities. Training is one way through which this can happen. Parliamentarians enter parliament with varying levels of skill and knowledge about the operation(s) of parliament. A needs analysis commissioned by the WEU in 1998 (Marks et al, 1998) found that some of the areas of competency that members of the legislatures need are:

- Law and policy formulation;
- Oversight of the executive and line departments;
- Ensuring effective internal organisational arrangements;
- Promoting and enhancing public participation in the legislature; and
- Ensuring effective financial management, control and accountability.

Some of these areas, for example the third, may not be equally necessary for all members, while others are. Not included in the list, but important in our view for women members in particular, is the ability to bring a gender perspective to each of the roles and responsibilities. On the one hand, this gender perspective will mean ensuring that women and men have equitable access to key decision-making positions within parliament and that both women and men have the capacity to perform their roles and responsibilities. On the other hand – and perhaps more importantly – a gender perspective would mean that parliamentarians are able to ensure that the legislatures perform all their functions in a way that will enhance gender equality and women's empowerment for ordinary citizens.

A provincial parliamentarian described the difference between a focus on gender equality between parliamentarians and gender equality in the society more broadly as follows:

It's not about how many toilets there are for women in parliament. It's about how we help people outside parliament, not us. How do we improve what we do here? In the beginning, I got the impression we fought for ourselves. But so many people outside don't have a toilet. They don't have a job, never mind what time they go to work or how long the day is.

Skills

Most parliamentarians enter parliament with few of the skills required to perform all the roles and responsibilities. In the interviews, responses to the question: "*What were you doing before becoming a member of the legislature?*" varied from; "I was a traffic officer" to "I was an administrator at Wits"⁶. One parliamentarian responded that she was a pharmacist, while another said she was a personal assistant to the provincial chairperson of the African National Congress (ANC). Several of the women's caucus chairpersons were previously organizers for the ANC. Several were previously teachers. Each of these jobs might have given the parliamentarian some appropriate skills. None would have given the full range.

Even those with experience of a particular skill, might have felt unable to use it adequately in the new environment. Thus, one parliamentarian who was well-known as a fiery orator in the union movement, reported her feelings on having to speak in parliament as follows:

I used to shiver when I first had to get up there. You have to know how to stand, how to speak, not to be too fast, be polite. It's not like we used to do it.

Another parliamentarian had previously been a municipal councillor. Yet she, too, said that when she first entered the legislature it was a "big nightmare". She referred, in particular, to difficulties in dealing with a large number of bills and the budget. She said that attending AWEPA and WEU workshops had made "a big difference" in this respect.

⁶ University of the Witwatersrand

Coming from such different backgrounds, and entering a new realm of responsibility, it is not surprising that a 1998 report to the national speaker found that many women MPs/MPLs lacked skills and confidence to participate fully in the procedures of parliament (CGE et al, 1999). These skills and knowledge are a pre-requisite to effective and meaningful participation in all parliamentary procedures.

TRAINING CULTURE

As noted, all the legislatures have Human Resources departments that deal with the training of members. Some of the training occurs when parliament is in recess. Some is organized internally, for example by committees. Much of the training is organized under the auspices of the main EUPSP.

A recent evaluation of the EUPSP (HSRC⁷ et al, 2002) notes that the training programmes generally do not take account of the varying degrees of understanding by parliamentarians and, in particular, do not provide for training beyond the basic. There is also little, if any, follow-up after training. This issue is discussed further below.

The EUPSP training evaluation also notes that “neither parliament nor any provincial legislature appears to have completed a systematic needs or competency assessment - where there was, the process was on an ad hoc basis, and appeared very flawed.” (HSRC et al: 2002) The report does not mention the needs analysis commissioned by the WEU (Marks et al, 1998). Furthermore, the training evaluation report notes that “none of the institutions has a formal monitoring and evaluation system to assess the outcomes and impact of the training on the ability of the members, to perform their roles and functions adequately.” (HSRC et al 2002: 1)

These issues are important in understanding the training culture within legislatures and national parliament. They are important to consider as they influence the outcome of the training projects undertaken by the WEU. If most training in the legislatures occurs on an ad hoc basis without adequate follow-up and evaluation, then the opportunities for positive outcomes from the WEU training programme are compromised. Also, if training is ad hoc and not related to what is happening in the legislature in particular committees and other processes, parliamentarians will be less likely to apply skills they have learnt. For example, lessons from a general workshop on gender mainstreaming are less likely to be applied than those from a workshop that assists portfolio committee members to develop a monitoring checklist to assess the gendered impact of policies and programmes where such monitoring is already part of the plan of that committee.

⁷ HSRC-Human Sciences Research Council

GENDER

Providing training in the gender field is challenging in virtually any context. It has particular challenges when it happens in the context of the legislature. It requires both a good understanding of the dynamics at play within the gender culture of the institutions and a good understanding of training.

With the establishment of the WEU, training for women members was provided separately, since they were considered to be at a greater disadvantage than men in terms of knowledge, skill, confidence and competencies to adequately fulfill their duties as parliamentarians. Thus the WEU project was funded separately from the EUPSP, and began earlier. However male members also needed training, and it was planned that the EUPSP programme would fund training for them as well as for women members. It is not clear if this general training was conceived as including training on gender issues.

The separation of the WEU from the EUPSP was seen as giving added emphasis – and perhaps importance – to training for women, but it brought with it some serious weaknesses. The separation of the structures meant that the WEU would have a gender aim and focus, while the EUPSP would deal with the “general” training of members. The WEU’s objectives are to attain “gender equality”, while the EUPSP sees its role as mainstreaming “democracy” in the legislatures.

The practical effect has been that only female members have been earmarked for training by the WEU on topics such as “gender mainstreaming” and the “women’s budget”, while the main training programme has ignored these issues. In a few cases, it has resulted in the attendance of female members at a particular training being funded by the WEU, while the attendance of male members at the same training is funded by the “main” EUPSP. This suggests, implicitly, that the “main” EUPSP is for the “normal”, members, while exceptional arrangements must be made if women are to attend. The repercussions of this separation are slowly becoming apparent to different players. One member of the Speakers’ Forum reported that the current “feeling is we need to integrate it more.”

To summarise, if the WEU is conceived as providing training only for women members, two problems can arise. Firstly, men may be excluded from receiving training on gender issues. Secondly, general training may be seen as having men as its primary targets. While the second is unlikely to happen, we did hear of some examples where the WEU was reported as having paid part of the cost of general training. Implicitly, this arrangement gives the message that women can only attend general training if there is “special” funding for them.

In the Eastern Cape, the realization of the drawbacks of a separate approach has led to WEU training being opened to men, and men being invited to join the women’s caucus. In Limpopo, we have also observed that some men are attending WEU events. In Western Cape,

too, informants reported that men were encouraged to attend training on gender issues. One informant remarked in this regard: “I can’t see the sense if only women are invited.”

Several interviewees made the point that there needs to be both types of training. Several parliamentarians stressed that they value training for women only in areas where they are likely to be more disadvantaged, or disadvantaged in particular ways as a result of gender issues. This would include, for example, public speaking and relating to the media. On the other hand, there also needs to be more room for integrated training where men learn about the importance of, and ways to achieve, gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF WEU

STAFF

Two people – one administrator and one co-ordinator – have been employed to staff the Women's Empowerment Unit since the start. The staff are employed to plan, oversee and implement the activities of the WEU.

Penelope Mayson has been working for the WEU since it began in 1997. She was first appointed as an administrator. In 2000, when the original co-ordinator left, she was appointed by the task team to be the co-ordinator of the WEU's activities.

The co-ordinator's personal work background gives her a good understanding of the parliamentary/legislature culture and how it functions administratively. In a previous job, for example, she was responsible for developing a new administrative system for one of the legislatures, producing a new legislature administrative manual and implementing it. Within the WEU, she has produced a financial manual that guides and organizes the finances of the unit. She, however, has less background in training and gender.

The following quote from a member of the Speakers' Forum suggests that the choice of a strong financial person was a conscious response to the financial difficulties of the previous funding period:

Because of difficulties under the first SIDA agreement, we have been more concerned about the financial side of things, whether the money is properly accounted for, and not the conceptual questions.

When Mayson became co-ordinator in 2002, Thabo Lekganyane was employed to take her place as administrator. Before working for the WEU, Lekganyane was employed as an administrative clerk at the Technikon Northern Gauteng Registry. She holds a diploma in public administration and a bachelors degree in management. At the end of April 2002, Lekganyane left the WEU to take up an administrative position in the Gauteng legislature.

Comments on staff during the evaluation were generally favourable. One informant, for example, described the co-ordinator as "very much devoted". Others commented favourably on how the WEU staff interacts with them. The main concern, where it arose, was around the understanding of gender. Thus one informant felt that the WEU staff "needed a lot of capacity building themselves in terms of what the real issues are in terms of women's representation and governance... They're very effective administrators, but not good around the strategic issues."

The staff members report to the task team.

TASK TEAM

The task team operates as the main decision-making body of the WEU. Members of the task team were selected in 1996, and have since been responsible for ensuring the effective management and functioning of the unit. The members of the task team were selected by the Speakers' Forum. They are all deputy speakers, and are drawn from the provincial and national legislatures. One informant suggests that the fact that the task team consists only of deputy speakers, rather than including some speakers, was significant. She felt that the male speakers "are not interested". The task team does, however, include both women and men.

Since the last funding period, there have been some changes in membership of the team. These are necessary, for example, when the previous incumbents leave the legislature or their position. The chairperson has changed, two new members have been added to the task team, while two have left.

The task team was responsible, in the first place, for identifying the work and programme areas that the WEU would undertake. They were also responsible for identifying and hiring staff members, selecting offices, obtaining office equipment and related activities. As the Unit evolved and its focus became clearer, the task team periodically reviewed its programme of action.

As a structure of the Speakers' Forum, the WEU is required to report to the Forum on its progress. The task team undertakes this. The task team is also responsible for reporting to the funders, SIDA.

Although all the task team members share responsibility for the unit, their roles and responsibilities differ. Each task team member is assigned to a particular province or provinces. Each is responsible for ensuring that the WEU's planned work is done and the objectives of the Unit are achieved in that region. Thus, for example, task team members may be required to intervene where WEU staff have been unable to get a response to their proposed training programme from the provinces.

Koti Nyama was elected as the chairperson of the unit in 1999. As a member and chairperson, she has additional responsibilities. Nyama is required to process the funding proposals that come to the WEU. She is responsible for authorizing the finances of the unit as she acts as the signatory. Her other responsibilities have included travelling to legislatures to improve their responsiveness to the training programme of the WEU. Several informants commented on the chairperson's commitment. One, for example, described her as "totally committed to [the WEU] succeeding – both for her personally as a woman to be successful and for the organisation as a gender project."

Since the task team members are all deputy speakers in their legislatures, organising a meeting where all of them will be physically present is extremely difficult. To overcome the problem, the staff of the WEU and the task team participate in tele-conferences on a monthly basis. Even with this approach, it is still difficult for all the task team members to be “present”. The most regular task team members at these meetings are; Deputy Speakers Nyama, Dukwana from the Free State and Mchunu from KwaZulu-Natal. Physical meetings are held once every quarter.

One of the members of the Speakers’ Forum reported that when renewal of the SIDA contract was being discussed, the Forum acknowledged that speakers and deputy speakers could not give the necessary attention to the Unit as they were “too scattered and unavailable”. The Forum thus discussed the need to “empower” the secretariat, and the possibility of establishing a support group of women outside the legislatures, based in the same location as the secretariat. To date, a support group has not been established.

With tele-conferences and physical meetings combined, in one quarter the WEU could organize three to four task team meetings. A report on all the task team meetings is compiled by the WEU staff and then presented to the Speakers’ Forum. Task team documents usually include what was discussed at the meetings, as well as what needs to be ratified by the Speakers’ Forum. These documents form the reporting system of the WEU to the Speakers Forum.

The reports to the Speakers’ Forum are comprehensive. The most recent task team report covers the last two task team meetings. The document discusses the funding proposals for the WEU, and enumerates possible funders for the continuation of the WEU’s programme. The report covers the future of the WEU, the training dates for some provinces, and the commissioned evaluation of the Unit. It outlines the partnership that the WEU entered into with AWEPA for 2002. It also notes the conferences and meetings of institutions such as the Gender Advocacy Programme (GAP) and QoL attended by WEU staff and invitations from the CGE. The report includes a brief financial transcript on the 2002 expenditure of the WEU. It records the resignation of the Unit’s administrator. Attached to the report are minutes from a meeting the WEU had with the CGE and QoL.

Other parliamentary structures, such as the women's caucuses and the EUPSP, work directly with the WEU in co-ordinating training workshops.

WOMEN'S CAUCUS

The women's caucus is a multi-party forum within the provincial legislature, where all women members meet to discuss and debate gender issues within the legislature. The women's caucus is also seen as providing a forum for the education and training of women

members of parliament (OSW, 2001). All provinces, with the exception of the Western Cape, have a women's caucus.

In the Western Cape, we got conflicting information on the current situation. Informant spoke about a newly established "gender caucus", but it appears that some, at least, were referring to a new standing committee described below. Others were, perhaps, discussing a more caucus-like body, but gave conflicting reports on when it met, who were members, and what it did. As will be seen below, due to this and other reasons, there has been limited WEU activity in the province. As one leading member of the legislature put it, in Western Cape "the political struggles ... have been much bigger than gender issues". She hoped that in future they could "secure [the women's caucus] in its right place."

Most provincial legislatures expect all women members to be members of the women's caucus. In the Eastern Cape, men in key positions are also members of the caucus. In the national parliament it seemed that some of the smaller parties nominate particular women to represent the party in the caucus.

Broadly speaking, the chairpersons of the caucuses describe the objectives of their caucuses as being to:

- train new MPLs when they come in;
- involve women, within and outside the legislature, to get empowered;
- ensure gender mainstreaming in the legislature;
- undertake oversight functions to ensure gender inclusivity, representation of women at all levels, and to influence legislation on women's issues; and
- create outreach programmes that assist women in civil society.

One chairperson also felt that the caucus had a role to play in ensuring gender mainstreaming in the private sector.

The objectives, functions and powers vary from province to province depending on the status and degree of recognition of the caucus within its respective legislature. In at least one province the women's caucus functions as a portfolio committee. In this instance, the caucus is able to monitor departments in much the same way as the QoL. Other caucuses are confined to facilitating training for women members. The "unrecognised caucuses" face extreme difficulties in finding time to meet and time for training as their activities are not considered by the committee responsible for internal arrangements and scheduling. The unrecognized caucuses also find difficulty in accessing finances for their identified activities.

Administrative support of the "unrecognised caucuses" is drawn from different quarters. Some caucuses approach the speakers' office for administrative support in co-ordinating WEU training.

In each provincial legislature, the women's caucus acts as a focal point through which the WEU co-ordinates its training programme. While the WEU functions as a “co-ordinating structure,” the women's caucuses act as the implementing bodies.

The WEU communicates with and through the chairperson of each women's caucus about matters related to the training activities of the unit. In practice, this communication often occurs through administrative staff who are allocated to the caucus or whom the caucus has managed to convince to assist them. The chairperson of the caucus is mandated by the WEU to ensure implementation of the training programmes. The chairperson also acts as the liaison between the Unit and the women's caucus members, as she is required to report back to the caucus members about the activities of the Unit. She is also expected to report on the training needs of caucus members as discussed in caucus meetings.

The women in the legislatures have put a lot of energy into discussing and fighting for a range of structures. The Gender Policy supports this approach in advocating a multitude of interlinking structures. There are, however, drawbacks to having so many structures. Firstly, there is sometimes confusion over the functions of the different structures, and even some territorial tensions. The different functions may be clear on paper, but in practice are often blurred. For example, in the interviewees it emerged that while the chair of the women's caucus in Limpopo was on maternity leave, most of the functions of the caucus continued because the QoL stepped in. Secondly, although the parliamentarians seem to enjoy sitting on committees, they clearly do not have sufficient time for all of them. As a result, they arrive late, leave early, and are often distracted when they do attend.

EUPSP LIAISON OFFICERS

Within all nine legislatures, there are people employed as “EU liaison officers” under the EUPSP. The liaison officers are responsible for the implementation of the EUPSP programme, and for ensuring that EUPSP guidelines are adhered to. Their duties include the co-ordination of EUPSP training events within the legislatures. The EUPSP liaison officers have reportedly been mandated by the European Union to provide technical assistance to the WEU.

Our informants said that this system works well within the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga legislatures. In Gauteng, the EU liaison officer does not provide assistance to the WEU. A recent EUPSP report notes that “the EU liaison officer there seemed not to know about the programmes they [WEU] offered.” (HSRC et al, 2002:14) This is particularly strange given that the WEU is physically housed in the Gauteng legislature.

The technical assistance of liaison officers takes the form of providing administrative assistance to co-ordinate the logistics of the training workshops being planned. The logistical co-ordination ranges from notifying the members of the training, through ensuring that the venue of the training is booked and confirmed, to compiling an attendance list. Some liaison

officers also produce training reports. Procedurally, the WEU requires the women's caucus to identify three service providers for each planned training event and to submit three quotes. The EU liaison officers usually fulfill this task. Added to this, the women's caucus may request that the liaison officer assist with communicating with an identified service provider. As one officer reported:

The chairperson would approach me to say, "we want training". She would say when and where. Then I have to book the place, get the attendance register and confirm everything prior to the training.

In the Eastern Cape legislature, the co-ordination is done through the head of the Human Resources department, with the EU liaison officer acting as a "technical adviser". Previously, the EU liaison officer was responsible as in other provinces. The responsibility shifted to the head of the Human Resources department after a restructuring which saw the liaison officer incorporated into the mainstream structure of the legislature.

TRAINING PARTNERSHIPS

The WEU can claim full credit for a range of training interventions across the country. It can also claim partial credit for training which has occurred through a number of partnerships. This section describes the nature of each of the partnerships.

The *Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa* (AWEPA) is an international NGO that was originally conceived as an association of European parliamentarians fighting against apartheid. Currently the organisation has spread across the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. It has offices in Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland, Mozambique, Tanzania, Burundi and Brussels. AWEPA, like the EUPSP, seeks to build the capacity of members of parliament and their staff with the aim of entrenching democracy in South Africa.

Within South Africa, AWEPA has a "women-specific" programme, and has been partnering with the WEU on this. The focus of the women-specific programme overlaps with some of the areas that the WEU has identified as key training areas. Thus AWEPA funds some of the training activities of the WEU.

Areas where AWEPA and the WEU have collaborated since 1998 are:

- a conference on "Women at the Crossroads" in 1998 (with GAP as a third partner);
- strategic planning workshops in 1999 and 2002;
- a national workshop on leadership skills, together with the British Council and GAP;
- gender budget training, using CASE and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), in Gauteng, Free State, Limpopo, Northern Cape and Western Cape; and
- tools for gender analysis (It is unclear where and when this occurred).

Each year the WEU and AWEPA agree on the areas of collaboration for that year. AWEPA sets aside a budget to facilitate the events. Usually the WEU assists in establishing the contact with women parliamentarians for whatever event is being organized.

The *Select Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA)* and *Association of Public Accounts Committees (APAC)* have facilitated the provision of specialized training. APAC is a skills training organization based in the Western Cape. It has provided skills training for the public accounts committees in the different legislatures. APAC approached the WEU requesting that they elect women parliamentarians to attend their training courses. This request was forwarded to the Unit's chairperson, who then became responsible for suggesting attendees. The request for delegates was circulated to all provinces, but only Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the North West responded.

We were told that most of the members who attended this training found it very useful. Our interviewees said the training was well delivered, and that they frequently refer to the training material provided by APAC.

Other relationships

The WEU has relationships with other *gender institutions outside of parliament*. The unit has established a relationship with the Office of the Status of Women (OSW) in the President's Office, and with the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE). The QoL is also a partner in this relationship. OSW, CGE and QoL have jointly decided to collaborate on issues pertaining to HIV/AIDS, violence against women, women and poverty/economy. They adopted the following key strategic objectives in a meeting held in Cape Town in March 2002;

- structural alignment and co-ordination of national and provincial programmes;
- strategic and effective alignment of departmental gender focal points with national gender machinery;
- collaboration with the men's movement;
- development of sustainable funding; and
- the creation of regional and international linkages.

There have been meetings held in the legislatures on the proposed areas of co-operation. The Gauteng legislature recently held a meeting on HIV/AIDS and violence against women.

Although the WEU welcomed the invitation to work with the CGE, QoL and OSW, significant outcomes cannot be expected in the near future as that are widely acknowledged weaknesses at present in most parts of the national gender machinery.

The Unit has engaged the services of *Rosieda Shabodien*, ex-director of GAP, on several occasions. She has facilitated conferences for the WEU, and facilitated a workshop which

resulted in the 2000 strategic plan. She also facilitated the mid-April WEU-AWEPA workshop for women's caucus chairs at which the SWOT⁸ exercise for this evaluation was conducted.

DOCUMENTS GUIDING THE WEU

Needs Analysis

During the first phase of funding, WEU commissioned a needs analysis. This analysis was intended to inform the subsequent training programme. The needs analysis emerged with a long list of needs, of which a summary follows:

Building Gender Awareness

- introductory course
- integrating gender into policy and planning

Time Management

- Establishing priorities
- Stress (management)
- Delegation (issues)

Effective communication skills

- Within the legislature
- Communication with the public

Personal Development

- Assertiveness
- Power and confidence
- Conflict Resolution

IT and computer Skills

- Word Processing
- Formatting documents
- E-mail
- Introduction to spreadsheets

Teambuilding for the provincial women's caucus

- The role and function of the women's caucus
- Setting objectives and establishing support mechanisms

⁸ Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The budgetary process and financial management

- The budgetary process and participatory processes
- Key people in the budget process
- Women and the budget
- Analysis from a gender perspective

As can be seen, the list included some general technical skills, such as computer skills, a large number of personal development topics, and a fairly small number of topics relating to gender. The list does not include any topics relating to law and policy making, except to the extent that the budget is a law. The list also does not indicate any need for sector-specific training. Given the fact that national parliament and provincial legislatures have not completed a systematic general needs assessment of parliamentarians' competencies, this needs assessment stands as one of the few attempts at documenting the different skills and competencies of parliamentarians across provinces.

The needs assessment informed the WEU about the type of training women members needed so as to enhance their participation in all levels of parliament. However, the needs assessment did not provide information about the level at which the training should be pitched. There was also no differentiation on what the focus of the training should be for each province.

Logical Framework

In the preparation for the second phase of funding, the current co-ordinator and the chairperson of the WEU developed a logical framework with the assistance of the EUPSP. This framework became part of the second agreement with SIDA. The WEU coordinator reported that the logical framework was "initiated from the needs that women identified", i.e. from the needs analysis that the WEU had commissioned in 1998. She also noted that the logical framework is "easier to implement" than a less focused plan of action.

The logical framework outlines the objectives and purposes of the WEU and the methods of implementation. It categorises and sketches the areas of intervention. The framework also details the method of verifying that training interventions occurred.

The aims of the WEU as expressed in the logical framework are to:

- achieve gender equality in all legislatures;
- have the quality and quantitative participation of women improved;
- achieve the mainstreaming of gender equality in laws and policies; and
- have cohesion between male and female members on the "engendering" of laws and policies.

The WEU also aimed to improve gender relations within and outside the legislatures.

The logical framework proposes multiple methods through which the WEU can measure its impact in the said areas. These include the general legislature reports such as Hansards, committee reports, laws and policies.

The logical framework acknowledges key dynamics involved in the realization of its goals. It makes the assumption that “women empowerment” extends beyond simply empowering women to participate more in legislative activities, but rather involves the more general achievement of gender equality. It acknowledges that parliamentarians are not homogeneous in their needs for training and that the different legislatures have different levels of development.

It is not clear to what extent the WEU has, in practice, used the logical framework to measure its achievements against its intended goals. The Unit has not itself examined the gender inclusiveness of laws and policies. The Unit has also not commissioned or undertaken any evaluation of verbatim committee reports or Hansards. The independent evaluation team was not required to undertake any such evaluation either. The review of such documents appears to be what a researcher located in the Unit might have done. However, although the WEU planned from the beginning to employ a researcher, this never transpired. Instead, the co-ordinator explained that the task team decided that the WEU would commission a researcher if and when the needs of the unit suggested this was necessary.

The framework, while reportedly helpful, leaves some questions unanswered. It fails to acknowledge that gender equality is a process, in which all areas of key institutions need to be engaged. The framework does not explain what it means by “gender equality”, “women empowerment” and “institutional transformation”. The key indicators that it has identified are process-based. This is probably inevitable, as gender mainstreaming is a process. The lack of definition of key terms is a weakness as different individuals, different parties, and different stakeholders may have different viewpoints on what these key concepts entail.

It can also be argued that the selection of one method of intervention, that being training, is not adequate in addressing the entire work area that the WEU states it wants to address. The achievement of gender equality, within the legislatures and outside the legislature, requires multiple methods of intervention. Properly conceptualized training is appropriate as one method, but it cannot be the only mechanism. Other programmes, perhaps related to training are necessary. Some ideas in this respect are outlined below. Alternatively, partnerships that allow for various methods of intervention by other players would need to be employed.

Workplan of the WEU as adopted in 2000

The workplan that formed part of the logical framework specified five result areas, as follows:

Result 1: Capacity building for self-assertiveness, legislative and constituency outreach skills increased

Result 2: Development of tools for institutional transformation to help transform provincial and national institutions

Result 3: Development of a partnership between men and women to combat discrimination and oppression of women

Result 4: Communication and co-operation between legislatures improved

Result 5: Development of women empowerment continuity tools to enhance sustainability.

The work-plan for 2000 shaped the training that the WEU undertook that year. During 2000, the WEU was able to implement training in the following areas:

- Local government restructuring
- Legislative and policy analysis
- Budget analysis
- Personal and leadership skills
- Protocol and etiquette training

The WEU also facilitated girls' and women's parliament events.

The year before that, 1999 the WEU was only able to implement events in partnership with other organizations. The WEU, in partnership with AWEPA, hosted an inter-provincial strategic planning workshop. Again in partnership with AWEPA, GAP and the British Council it was able to implement a workshop on leadership skills. Another partnership with the Women's Development Foundation (WDF) allowed the WEU to host a banquet honouring women members in the first democratic government of 1994-1999. While the latter is not, in fact, training, it was felt strategic for the WEU to assist in this way, particularly as the relationship with national parliament had been very weak.

It can be argued, therefore, that the workplan in 2000 assisted the WEU to craft its areas of implementation in a more focused way.

At some stage, the WEU narrowed its focus even further, to focus on three topics, namely:

- Policy and legislative analysis;
- Budget process and budget through a gender sensitive lens; and
- Personal and leadership skills.

These are the areas of training that the WEU has unwaveringly pursued over the most recent period. Although a task team member acknowledges that "there is a skills difference in the provinces" and that the "details of training differ from institution to institution," this focused approach was intended to bring some uniformity in approach across provinces. So, for example, each province was meant to have at least one training on each of the three specified topics.

The table below records the training that has taken place under the auspices of the WEU since the beginning of the second phase of funding. Training funded and organized by AWEPA is included, as AWEPA and WEU reached an agreement that the former would take responsibility for training in the area of gender budgets.

Training undertaken through WEU

| Province | Done | Rescheduled | Refused | AWEPA |
|---------------|------|-------------|---------|-------|
| Eastern Cape | 6 | | 3 | 2 |
| Free State | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Gauteng | 4 | | | 1 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 5 | | | |
| Mpumalanga | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Limpopo | 2 | | | 1 |
| Northern Cape | 2 | | | 1 |
| North West | 4 | | | |
| Western Cape | | | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 25 | 3 | 7 | 8 |

The table excludes WEU's funding of lunches for events in the Gauteng legislature and national Parliament as these cannot really be regarded as training. Similarly, it excludes a meeting with the Northern Cape Speaker. It further excludes general WEU meetings and all non-AWEPA partnerships events. It thus focuses on what happened in the provinces. As discussed below, WEU has been unsuccessful in arranging any training within national parliament.

The table shows varied performance across the provinces. Eastern Cape has been most active. This is, at least partly, due to the presence of an energetic, committed and well-positioned EUPSP liaison officer. The Free State has been least active.

The three reschedulings recorded in the table do not reflect the true extent of this problem as training which was rescheduled but which eventually happened is reflected as completed rather than rescheduled. Several informants noted that reschedulings were frequent. As a training provider, CASE has experienced this problem several times.

One significant WEU event which was mentioned several times in interviews was the "Gender Agenda" conference of August 2001, held in Durban. This conference brought together participants from across all the legislatures as well as the national parliament. Of particular significance, was that senior office-bearers such as the speakers and deputy speakers were invited to attend.

TRAINING IN DIFFERENT PROVINCES

This section provides details on training arranged by the WEU for the provincial legislatures. It draws out factors and relationships that make it easier or more difficult for training to happen.

Eastern Cape

The women's caucus in the Eastern Cape has been active in WEU training events. A spate in activity happened after the chairperson of the WEU visited the province to identify the problems the province was facing. Since then, the Eastern Cape has been able to take on training in local government restructuring in 2000, budget analysis in 2001, and the legislative process and financial management in 2001. The EU liaison officer in this province is reported to be “dedicated, strong and pushing the agenda”.

Mpumalanga

It has been difficult to get this province involved in the training activities of the WEU. The WEU struggles to get any response from the women's caucus chair. Like other chairs, the Mpumalanga caucus chair was invited to a number of different WEU events, such as the Durban conference and the strategic planning workshop. However, she reportedly attended none of them. She was unavailable to the evaluation team verify this information.

In 2000, Mpumalanga submitted to the WEU two proposals to the WEU, namely for a “girls and women's parliament”, and for training on protocol and etiquette training. Both of these proposals were turned down by the WEU. The fees for the two events were R12 000 and R22 375 respectively, which is more than most other events funded by the WEU. The training workshops that have been carried out are “Understanding Gender” in 2002, leadership skills training in 2001, and training on the budget and budgeting process in 2002. The WEU reports that they normally do not liaise with the chairperson of the women's caucus when planning the training. Instead they speak to the overall chairperson of committees. This reportedly works better since political in-fighting prevents the facilitation by the women's caucus of training across party lines, as is the mandate of the WEU.

Free State

Edition 13 of the newsletter of the EUPSP notes, in discussing Free State, that “while progress is being made in terms of training for members, programmes relating specifically to gender issues are lacking.” The Free State EU liaison officer notes that “previously enough was done to address gender but this year nothing tangible has taken place” (PSP, October-December 2001:12-3). These difficulties exist despite a female Premier, two female members of the executive council (MECs), a female secretary of the legislature, and the existence of a provincial QoL.

The province reportedly struggles with the same problems of political in-fighting as Mpumalanga. The lack of participation in WEU training activities is exacerbated by the fact that there are only six women in the legislature. The problems are compounded by the fact that the task team member of the WEU responsible for ensuring that WEU training takes place in this province is a man. The women members argue that the directive to carry out training in the province should not be facilitated or driven by a man.

The Free State has cancelled a number of planned training events. For example, one workshop, scheduled to happen in April 2002, was cancelled at the last minute. The problem was at least partly a result of a communication difficulty in the Free State similar to that of Mpumalanga, as the WEU cannot liaise with the chairperson of the women's caucus. The communication occurs instead through the office the Speaker. The Speaker's office failed to notify the women parliamentarians of the training in time. This resulted in a very poor turn out, and the workshop had to be cancelled.

There is only one training workshop that the women parliamentarians have attended. This was on personal and leadership skills. It is unclear from the WEU records which year this took place. As with Mpumalanga, the women's caucus chairperson did not attend the inter-provincial meeting of women's caucus chairs at which the SWOT exercise was done and interviews conducted.

Northern Cape

This province was described by one informant as "practically impossible". The WEU complains that the leadership of the women's caucus, under the deputy speaker, has made organising training events difficult. There are three ordinary women parliamentarians and three women MECs. The women's caucus chairperson is the deputy speaker of the legislature and chair of the internal arrangements committee. She is thus in a good position to schedule training.

However, despite a meeting with the Deputy Speaker from the chairperson of the WEU, the WEU records record that only two training workshops have occurred. These were "Understanding Gender" in 2002 and a workshop on the budget process in 2001. The latter workshop was co-ordinated by AWEPA.

There is some inconsistency in reports on the number of training carried out in this province. In addition to the two workshops reflected in WEU documentation, the women's caucus chairperson reports that they had an additional workshop on the Public Finance Management Act facilitated by the WEU. She also noted at least one event in her constituency which she attributed to the WEU.

North West

The North West women's caucus has responded well to the offer of training facilitated by the WEU, despite the fact that they experience severe problems in terms of recognition, budget and time allocation. This illustrates the fact that caucuses do not need to have formal recognition to successfully co-ordinate the training from the WEU. The province received training on the "Women's Budget" in 2000, "Understanding Gender" in 2002, and a workshop on personal finance in 2001. The women's caucus chairperson reports that they still need to do "communication" training.

One point in particular stands out about the training that has occurred in North West. The situation in North West suggests that even where caucuses are relatively weak, they can identify desired training outside the three focus areas. This raises questions about the advisability of following a uniform approach too strictly.

Gauteng

As stated before, since the WEU is physically located in the Gauteng Legislature, the co-ordination of training events for the women's caucus should be relatively easy. However, only one training workshop was held in 2000, namely "Legislative and Policy Analysis". Subsequently, there was training on constituency outreach in 2001, and in 2002 "Understanding Gender" and "Mainstreaming Gender" workshops were held. The province has thus performed above average in terms of number of training events. The women's caucus also hosted an international women's day event in March 2001, for which the WEU covered the catering costs.

KwaZulu-Natal

Much like the Eastern Cape the women in this legislature have had the opportunity of attending training workshops on all three focus areas that the WEU has outlined. There has been training on the budget and on personal and leadership skills, on writing and public speaking, on policy formulation, and on understanding gender. All of this training happened a year ago, and there has been no subsequent arrangement of any WEU training in this legislature, except for participation in the meeting of women's caucus chairs. KwaZulu-Natal hosted the conference of August 2001.

Western Cape

The Western Cape is a unique legislature, in that it does not have a "women's caucus". As noted above, there were confusing reports as to whether or not they have a "gender caucus". The legislature has recently formed a standing committee which deals with gender, youth, disability, and other constitutional issues. There is some confusion among members and office-bearers of the legislature about these different structures. One of the members was very clear about the need for a women's caucus separate from the standing committee:

A women's caucus could discuss gender issues to feed in and give direction to the standing committee. Because, of course, in politics you always have to abide by

your party caucus [in the standing committee]. My hope is that we can do [the women's caucus] above party-political lines. A women's caucus would empower women to sensitise their [party] caucus to gender issues.

Because of the problems, the WEU does not currently have a natural channel to co-ordinate its training events. However, as the North West situation has illustrated, a strong women's caucus is not the only way to ensure that WEU activities take place. Another factor that determines, whether this training is taken seriously, is the interest and will of the people involved.

The Western Cape women submitted a proposal to the WEU in 2001 to conduct training in capacity building. This proposal was turned down. There has been no training facilitated by the WEU in this legislature, except for the budgetary training in 2001 that was co-organised and funded by AWEPA.

The lack of WEU training in the Western Cape follows a more general pattern in the province. The staff member of the legislature responsible for Human Resources noted that, overall, training in the Western Cape legislature was "very little".

National Assembly

The WEU has repeatedly failed to involve women in the national parliament in its training workshops. As in the Western Cape legislature, the dynamics of training and gender politics are different to those experienced by the other eight provinces. There is also a common perception that national parliamentarians "don't need training in their individual capacity since they are skilled and educated".

The training dynamics in the national parliament are also different, as it is mainly the political parties and not the legislature that are responsible for the training of members. The WEU turned down a proposal submitted by an ANC female representative for training on "National Planning". One reason that this was turned down was that the expense of the training was beyond WEU allocation criteria. The task team of the WEU has decided to completely exclude national parliament in its training events. Parliament was, however, included in the Durban conference of August 2001.

The overall picture

From WEU records it seems that the Unit has usually only been able to facilitate one or two workshops for each province since 1999. In 2000 the WEU was able facilitate three training workshops, namely in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the North West. The next year, 2001, the unit was more successful in getting a response from the provinces. Nine workshops were conducted. The Eastern Cape did two workshops, Mpumalanga one, the Northern Cape one, North West one and Gauteng one. The other three occurred in KwaZulu-Natal. In 2002, as agreed in the "Gender Agenda Conference" of August 2001, the unit has been instituting

training on "Understanding Gender and Mainstreaming Gender". So far the provinces that have had training in "Understanding Gender" are Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Northern Cape and the North West. The training was cancelled in the Free State, but might occur in the future. The workshop on mainstreaming gender has happened only in the Gauteng and Limpopo legislatures.

As the table above shows, there are provinces that have been very active in the training that the WEU offers. Other provincial legislatures have been slow with the uptake of this training. The discrepancies can, at least partly, be traced back to the institutional arrangements and culture of that respective province. Where the institution is "gender friendly" and gender bodies recognised, the training of the WEU has been more successful. In others, the opposite holds. This is confirmed by the complaints from some women's caucuses that they do not have time or a formal and functional platform from which to discuss and implement their training needs. One task team member explained:

The issue is of women empowerment, but if people are not able to take it up in their political structures, then there will be problems. As long as women's issues are not part of the programme of the legislature, we will have problems.

But the problem of lack of take-up of training resources and opportunities is not confined to the WEU or to gender-related training. For example, an office-bearer in the Western Cape legislature noted:

Training is very ad hoc. I have meetings with the standing committee chairs where we assess their programmes. Last year the chairs were given 60 000 for the year. Only SCOPA spent its money. Some only spent 1 000. The money just sat. So now we have asked them to develop business plans.

Therefore, many of the problems experienced by the WEU are also internal to the institutions that the WEU is attempting to function within. These difficulties and hiccups implementing training programmes in legislatures by the WEU are not unique to the organization. Their solution requires focus and work from all relevant parties in the institution. As far as the WEU itself is concerned, the solutions (and some of the problems) lie with the co-ordinating bodies of the WEU, such as the women's caucus and the EU liaison officers in the respective provinces.

TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF MPS AND MPLS

As noted, the evaluation team interviewed members from three case study legislatures and the national parliament, as well as caucus chairs in most provinces and office-bearers in selected legislatures. In this section, we report on responses obtained during these interviews.

What were you doing before you were became a member of the legislature?

As noted above, members come to parliament from diverse backgrounds. A few entered with adequate knowledge about how parliament operates. Most were very new to the dynamics that parliament presents and lacking in some of the needed skills and knowledge.

Some examples from the parliamentarians we interviewed illustrate the diversity. One member in the KZN legislature worked as a political analyst before she became an MPL. Another worked as a “foreman” in a hospital in the KZN area. A member of parliament was previously running a private company, while another was previously an MPL in another province. In Gauteng, one parliamentarian was a university administrator while another worked for a trade union. Each of these parliamentarians would have been able to use some skills from their previous jobs, but might have been lacking in other skill areas. The unevenness in knowledge presents challenges in devising a training programme that will meet the needs of the group as a whole.

Who do you see yourself representing in parliament?

Interviewees were aware that we were evaluating the WEU. It is therefore not surprising that most members answered the question above by saying that they see themselves as representing women and their communities. However, some responded that they saw themselves primarily as representing their parties. Others saw themselves representing the “community” more broadly, rather than primarily women. The three quotes below illustrate this range:

Predominantly the voiceless, powerless women, especially young women who are vulnerable and disempowered.

I represent women and children, women and men from the disadvantaged community.

I represent the party.

What have your biggest challenges been in being a member of the legislature?

One member, who had been in parliament since 1994, gave a response to the above question which related directly to the training mandate of the WEU. She said that her biggest challenge was training new members within her party. She explained that she found it challenging to train them in reading budget statements, legislation, speeches and motions. She said it was the “training transition” that she felt was a challenge.

One member, a man in the Western Cape, stated “every day is a challenge”. He indicated that the challenge for him lay in the political grouping that his party was engaged in:

Since 1999, the party has gone through a period of turmoil politically, and all the problems of forming a bigger political opposition party with the DA and NNP.

His response confirms that it is not only women members who experience problems in parliament.

Another member, from a minority party, complained that her biggest challenge was getting exposure within parliament. Her response suggested, from a different angle, that it is not only gender that determines whose voice gets heard. The member explained that bigger parties have more exposure, in terms of time that they can spend delivering their speeches, and having the opportunity to go sit in the NCOP. She said:

We also have a time limitation in speaking, because you get a quota on time, so you can't say effectively what you want to say. The numbers thing inhibits a lot.

Besides political and party wranglings, most of the members in KwaZulu-Natal reported that their biggest challenge was uplifting women in their communities. Two of these MPLs said more specifically that their biggest challenge was acquiring funds with which to support women's projects in the constituencies they serve.

Mainly, women are oppressed. If we could get the funding where we can empower women. And maybe to also skill them. But, that also means money.

You see, for our women the biggest problem is unemployment. We want to see them employed. So there are a number of projects I'm involved in.

One of these MPLs felt dissatisfied "with the way things happen". She felt that instead of "politicians [being] are sick with talk", they should be asking "how will this benefit the people?" She complained that MPLs "think for the people" without asking what the people want. She explained that her biggest challenge was getting her colleagues to be involved in participatory development. She emphasized that this would ensure that the needs of the people are adequately addressed.

The challenges that MPLs in Gauteng listed were described from a more overtly "political" angle. One MPL said that her biggest challenge was being "representative of government in articulating the issues". She felt that this lay in understanding its policies and being able to articulate them well. Another parliamentarian felt exasperated by the poverty she witnessed. She felt that her biggest challenge was making people understand that transformation would be a slow process:

People expect to see miracles out of us. They want immediate change. You don't know how to change the situation quickly. And you know women are the poorest.

Somewhere between KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng viewpoints described above, a parliamentarian in the Western Cape stated that she wanted to translate “parliament into bread and butter issues for the people to fathom their own problems and come up with solutions themselves”. One way of seeing the differences, is that the Gauteng parliamentarian saw parliamentarians doing things for people. The Western Cape person was saying people must do it themselves. It is, however, dangerous to draw any conclusions as only a few parliamentarians in each legislature were interviewed.

A minority party representative in the national parliament was similar to the KwaZulu-Natal parliamentarian quotes above in highlighting party rather than gender issues. She complained that her biggest challenge was how the media undermines and sidelines other political parties.

Media bias. The media come in and think you're irrelevant and unimportant. You get sidelined because you're from the [Inkatha Freedom Party] I had a really good speech, even MPs from other parties complimented me. But they made no reference to it.

What is clear from the discussion above is that training alone will not address all the challenges faced by parliamentarians. It can, however, assist in addressing some of them.

Which training workshop was the most useful or memorable?

Both ordinary parliamentarians and caucus chairs were asked which workshop they found most memorable or useful. Unfortunately, many informants experienced difficulties in remembering specific workshops, their titles and topics. As one noted in this respect: “My memory is troublesome.” Many also did not know which workshops were facilitated by WEU and which by other players. This lack of exact memory was also referred to in the EUPSP training evaluation (HSRC, 2002).

Overall, interviewees felt that the training that they had received as a result of the WEU's interventions was useful. In terms of topic, the gender workshops facilitated by Oshadi Mangena and the financial workshops were cited most often as being most useful. There could be some bias towards the gender workshops because these are the ones that occurred most recently and will thus be most easily remembered. However, everybody who cited the Mangena workshops was very positive about them. The second most commonly cited WEU (in fact AWEPA) workshops were those relating to gender and budget.

The following quotes illustrate some of the reasons given as to why particular workshops were useful. Most quotes emphasise that training is useful if it can be “used” afterwards in the parliamentarian's job:

All financial workshops, and the gender workshops. Because they are within the framework of the problems we have to deal with as women. They empower me to be able to crack the rock. And to argue with facts.

The gender training one, because the service provider was clear, I could understand and be able to implement.

The communication thing. It was about how to communicate with the person next to you.

Other interviewees said that technical skills training such as “the computer skills one” were personally useful for them. One parliamentarian stated that she found “the personal and leaderships skills” very useful, as it showed “how to manage being with people, being the same as them, as well as maintaining a sense of authority”.

The fact that some members have difficulty remembering what training they have attended, and what the training was about, may be the result of attending many training workshops, as illustrated by the following quotes:

I have gotten lots of trainings. Some of them I can't even remember.

Besides the training that the WEU facilitates, training is a scheduled item on the annual calendar of all legislators. As evaluators, we do not think it is important that participants know who delivers training. It is, however, important that they benefit from the content. With some of the informant, it was not clear whether participants were benefiting in terms of learned content or just getting some sort of exposure to a range of things.

Of particular concern, is where members cannot remember the service providers, or even the content. For example, some interviewees remember only obscure things like the venue.

I have attended other workshops from for various committees. I have also gone on study tours in the form of overseas trips, to Germany and Cuba.

I can't remember now. It's been a long time. It was in Durban. I can't remember the facilitators.

Even women's caucus chairs, who are meant to play a key role in organizing WEU training, sometimes seemed confused. One chair claimed that there had been two more WEU trainings in her province than are reported by the WEU itself. Another chair did not know some of the details of the trainings that had taken place.

Which training was the least useful? And why?

One task team member responded to this question by saying that if women request training based on their needs, one cannot say it was useless. Because the training is based on a need, it must, by definition, be useful. A KwaZulu-Natal MPL adopted a similar position:

What we usually do is sit down and decide we need training on this one. I don't think there would have been a less useful one.

One member in KwaZulu-Natal said that she did not attend many training sessions, because "the level of skill is different for each member". She argued that "some members don't need training", and that, because of the "level of experience I have, I'm not going to be attending any of those things". She felt that induction training was necessary, but that the level of other training had to be advanced, to take into account the different levels of skills that members have.

This member's response reflects a fairly common feeling that WEU training is necessary for new parliamentarians, but that the WEU does not really serve longer-standing parliamentarians. In particular, one outside observer noted that many parliamentarians are "beyond the 'soft' issues of personal capacity building" which the WEU focused on in the first years. Others suggested that many were also beyond the basic level training in other topics that the WEU provides. The need for training at different levels was taken up by a range of interviewees. It is also repeatedly stressed in the general evaluation of EUPSP training (HSRC et al, 2002).

Other members had no suggestions to make, as they found that all the training that they had received was useful. The following two quotes illustrate this response:

I don't think there was one. I don't think there would have been a less useful workshop.

There isn't. I appreciate any knowledge I get from anywhere.

However, the second member elaborated, "some you can remember because they were outstanding, so you always use the information." This elaboration suggests that there were workshops that were more useful than others, but that informants might be hesitant to label anything in a negative way.

An MPL in Gauteng complained that the first "women's budget" workshop they had, was the least useful, because the service providers were unprepared, and seemed ignorant of how to run the workshop. She explained that "we ended up running the show, showing them what to do and what not do." She concluded, "I left with very little knowledge from that one."

Another colleague within the same legislature also complained about this workshop, but said that one of the problems might have been that “the budget was not familiar yet” to her.

The Gauteng workshop was the first budget training that was facilitated by IDASA. The relatively negative responses could be a result of the facilitator’s self-acknowledge lack of familiarity with the area. The following quotes, describing IDASA gender budget workshops in other legislatures, suggest that the quality improved significantly.

A Western Cape MPL characterized the gender budget workshop as the most useful training. She commented on both method of training and content:

We looked at our own budget page-by-page. We looked at how do we engender it. It wasn’t all listening and lecturing... It was very exciting.

Another Western Cape parliamentarian reported that the gender budget training was an “eye-opener” for her.

There was, however, also an MPL in KwaZulu-Natal who found the budgetary training the least useful of all training she had received. In this case, one of the problems was the difficulty of the topic. The MPL suggested that the solution to the problem was to have further workshops on the topic:

That budgetary thing. It was good for those that did accounting. People that are good with numbers. It was good, but I did not understand it. The implementation is the problem. When the cycle comes, at least ones eyes are a bit open. If you do it once, as they have done it, it does not help. It needs to be done again for one to be empowered.

Several members suggested the need for specialized training. One member suggested that specialized training on specific gender-related issues rather than gender more generally, as provided by Oshadi Mangena, was needed. By way of example, this member argued that it would be useful if the WEU could provide training in legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act, and other gender legislation.

Have you ever used any of the materials which you received during training? If so, can you give examples of which materials? How have you used them?

The usefulness of training workshops can also be measured through the usage of material presented at the workshop. From our informants, it seems that the most widely used material is that comes from the APAC training modules, and material on the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). Members use the material for various purposes. Some refer to the material when they make speeches, or when they perform their oversight functions over departments. Others simply use them as information sources:

I use the APAC stuff, on the role of the public accounts and committees. I also use the Public Finance Management Act on how to transform systems of government.

I use the APAC file, especially when it comes to the budget. You can pull it out and read it. Even if you shelve it, when the time comes, you can pull it out and it will assist you.

I use the PFMA booklet, during the budget cycle with departments. The Gauteng workshop helped simplify the PFMA for us.

Others reported that they reproduce the materials and distribute them to their constituencies as a form of information:

It is very useful that we are given these packages. We carry them to constituency meetings. We were given brochures on grants, and gave them away to the constituency.

I'm the deputy chair of the women's league, so in that line I have to use the material.

SERVICE PROVIDERS

The WEU does not itself provide training. Instead, it commissions service providers to do so. In this sub-section we mainly report on the experiences of service providers. We first, however, make some general observations on criteria for selection of service providers.

The evaluation of the EUPSP training notes that only the Northern Cape could provide the criteria used to select that programme's service providers. The Northern Cape's criteria were (a) whether the organisation providing the training is locally based (presumably meaning in the province), (b) if they are from a "previously disadvantaged" position, (c) their training cost, and (d) previous experience conducting training. (HSRC et al, 2001:17) The WEU criteria are similar in that they consider the cost, the experience of the trainers, and availability. However, the criteria have not been applied consistently across the provinces. Costs in training vary greatly. Reportedly, one service provider was paid up to eighteen thousand rands for a two-day training event. Another was paid R1 500 per day for a two day training workshop.

The EUPSP evaluation report does not discuss the weight given to the four stated factors. This also does not seem to have been openly discussed within the WEU. It seems that the primary reason why some proposals from provinces have been turned down is cost. This is a

difficult issue, as it could create tensions if the WEU asks the provinces to get quotes but then turns down a proposal on the basis of the Unit's evaluation of the provider's fee or perceived quality. On the other hand, the WEU needs to be concerned about quality if it is to attain its objectives.

We were told that the WEU had set a standard rate of R1 500 per day for training providers. They had since, however, realised that providers usually expected more than this. Further, this amount had not been increased to keep up with inflation. The WEU has thus been flexible about fees. From the information we obtained it was not possible to see exact fees for different events as the total amount paid is sometimes for one and sometimes for more days, and also sometimes includes additional payments such as for travel. Nevertheless, it seems that there must be big differences in fees. In the North West, in particular, the amounts paid seem high considering that the providers are from the province and should thus not need large travel amounts. In a few cases, it seems that the issue of providers asking a particularly high fee has been addressed by having both the EUPSP and WEU pay their standard amounts for a single event. This approach is rationalized by saying that the EUPSP is paying for male participants and the WEU for female participants.

Three service providers were interviewed for the purposes of this evaluation. Each of them facilitated training in a different key area of the logical framework reported above.

Two of the service providers, provided training for a single legislature, one for KwaZulu-Natal and the other for Mpumalanga. The third facilitator provided training for a number of provinces, namely, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape, and Mpumalanga.

The method of procurement of service providers differs in every province. In most provinces the EU liaison officers are expected to assist the women's caucus by fulfilling this role, by assisting the women's caucus. However, sometimes these duties are left to the WEU, or the women's caucus and whatever support staff they may have access to.

The type of service providers that are commissioned differs across provinces. Some provinces have been able to secure relatively skilled facilitators who are familiar with the field. In other cases, there have been instances where people without facilitation skills and experience have been commissioned. For example, in KwaZulu-Natal, a clinical psychologist was commissioned to facilitate training on personal and leadership skills, in 2000. This person may well have had content knowledge, but did not necessarily have facilitation skills. In other cases, service providers have included university lecturers and ex-MPLs. In the case of our three interviewees, it seems that each had at least some of the necessary experience and skills. In these cases, then, the trainers seemed appropriate

In some cases the trainers are well versed in gender issues and the training focuses squarely on gender. In other cases, the trainers know nothing about gender and the training does not purport to be gender-sensitive in any other way other than that it targets women members.

According to the WEU's organizational system, service providers are required to produce and submit a training report to the WEU before they can receive payment for the workshop. Although this system appears to be mandatory practice for the WEU, the content and type of the training reports vary. Further, it seems that service providers are not always asked to submit a report.

What is your main job in the organization?

This question was asked to each of the three service providers selected as respondents. It was intended as one measure of the training background of facilitators. One facilitator reported that she was employed as a welfare researcher within her organisation. She had previous experience in budget-related training, although not specifically on gender budgets, the topic on which she was commissioned. She facilitated training on the budget for various provinces through the AWEPA/WEU partnership.

Another facilitator was a lecturer at a university, and provided the training in her personal capacity. The third service provider was an MPL before he began consulting full time as a trainer-facilitator. All three service providers thus had some training experience.

How were you briefed and by whom?

Presenting training for parliamentarians is different from other training situations. In particular, one is dealing with a group of high status women, of different parties, some of whom might be reluctant to, as one informant put it, "expose their weaknesses." Full briefing of the service providers is thus important.

There is also often a complex range of processes happening within a legislature that is not widely known. Knowledge of legislature-specific processes can assist a facilitator to provide training that is relevant and to understand the responses of participants to issues that come up in the process.

Two of the service providers reported that the EUPSP liaison officer approached them to facilitate the training. The third facilitator, who gave training across several provinces, initially received the directive from the training manager within her organisation. She was given little, if any, information as to what was required and also had no experience on the specific topic:

There was no information. I had no interaction with those types of issues.

No doubt at least partly because of these difficulties, there were reports of problems with this first training. Subsequently, a relationship was established, the facilitator gained in skills, and reports improved.

Other facilitators also noted the lack of information about the required content and style of the training. One facilitator said that the only information provided was a directive about where the venue would be. Another stated:

There was no outline of objectives. I sort of designed it around policy formulations and development, oversight functions on financial and policy and public accounting oversight.

The budget facilitator noted:

There was no information. I had to plan and design my own.

In one case, the service provider reported that he was told to work “from the known to the unknown” by the EUPSP liaison officer. Other service providers said that they were aware that members had varying levels of skills, but were not briefed on how to deal with this. This caused problems in the actual training, and in the bridging of skills and knowledge differences between different members as well as different provinces. The briefing, or lack of it, for facilitators hampered training being contextualised, and implemented based on the needs of that particular group of parliamentarians.

Using the same service provider across provinces to facilitate the same workshop has its merits, in terms of achieving consistency across the provinces. However, the training has to be conducted at a different level each time, in each province, depending on the needs of that province. For example, one facilitator noted that, from her experience of providing training across all provinces, she realized that she had to engage the parliamentarians in each province differently, in terms of the level at which she presented the material, and the time she spent on each item.

Thus, as reflected in the WEU's 1998 needs assessment, one can argue, that service providers must be commissioned differently, in terms of the time they will spend training, and the level at which they will pitch the training. Arguably, extra time, money and effort should be spent on the weaker provinces. This approach would, however, be likely to encounter political resistance.

What was your training method?

Generally the service providers said they employed multiple techniques in their approach to the training. One of the providers was able to use exercises from a set of gender budget

materials prepared by the Gender Education and Training Network (GETNET) and Women's Budget Initiative. The other two facilitators described their methods as follows:

I use a holistic approach. I talk about members' responsibilities, then we discuss, in question-answer style. We also have group discussion and individual assignments. I have a part where I lecture, where I give new stuff. Then there is also counselling.

I had several training methods. I wanted a lot of participation. So I used case studies, using pieces of legislation, like the Skills Development Act. I broke them into syndicate groups. They would conduct their own discussions. We would conclude with a plenary sessions, where I would summarise the group discussions.

Did you receive feedback from the organisers after the training had taken place?

All the facilitators reported that they did not receive any feedback after the training. One said that he requested the Head of Human Resources in the province to write a letter describing what had transpired. The other two facilitators said that they received no formal feedback at all from the organisers.

Was there an evaluation of the workshop? Who compiled the evaluation report?

All three facilitators regarded evaluation as standard practice at the end of a training intervention. However, the way in which this occurred differed across the three.

One facilitator said her organization, which does regular training, had initially prepared their own training evaluation forms. However, she decided to use the AWEPA evaluation form, because it was better quality.

The second facilitator said that the consultancy, similarly, had its own "evaluation card", and that participants "must comment on the back of the card". The facilitator said that this card was for his personal use rather than for WEU. This facilitator requested the EUPSP officer to follow up with the members a month after the training to rate the success and failure of the workshop. The response to his request was a one-page letter to the WEU stating that the members "enjoyed" the training.

The third service provider said that, as a lecturer, she regarded evaluations as standard practice. However she said that the women's caucus and the EU liaison officer did not request an evaluation.

Not formally. I took the evaluation forms for my own analysis. I prepared the evaluation forms. It was standard practice. They did not specifically ask for an evaluation.

What would you say the strengths of the training were?

All three facilitators could report on positive aspects of the training they facilitated. All their responses spoke, in some way, about involving participants in the training and relating it to their experience:

It was practical in nature. Getting people to engage with the provincial budgets.

Personally, I think one of the strengths is that I have been there at all levels. I know how they work, the systems. You see, when I was an MPL I used to represent Mpumalanga.

The fact that they had experienced community work, and that I was tapping into their experience. I was not training in a vacuum. The fact that they were in their own environments, so they were not alienated.

The quotes also show that each service provider derived strength from different quarters. Every service provider will be different, even when they are presenting on the same workshop. The experience will also differ according to the province. Thus the facilitator, who had the experience of training around the country states, “it was different for different provinces. For Gauteng it was easy, while it was not for the Northern Cape”.

What did you learn from the WEU training?

We asked each facilitator what they personally had learnt from the experience of conducting training for the WEU. For the budget facilitator, the experience confirmed the great need for gender analysis and budget training:

That there's a great need for gender analysis and budget training. People felt powerless, because they did not know how to do it.

The second facilitator's experience revealed the depth of organisational problems in the legislature, in that training was not endorsed by the highest office in the legislature, and this resulted in poor attendance:

At the organisational level, they should try to work with people who take the decisions. [The legislature staff and EUPSP officer] were not able to get the people to participate. They should make sure that a more dedicated time within the legislature is there. In theory it's there, but in practice it's not.

The facilitator also felt that the legislatures needed more skill in outsourcing and obtaining good service providers, because the experience of bad training made members uninterested in training.

The KwaZulu-Natal service provider said that she had gained a lot from experiencing first hand what women in decision making structures are exposed to. She said it forced her to reconsider her approach to teaching.

Methodology-wise I became more sensitive to their needs. Normally I would go in there knowing what I would deliver. From their own experiences, I learnt a lot. I became more sensitive to how I should approach their training.

She adds that she also learnt to be careful, since her participants came from different ideological backgrounds.

OTHER ASPECTS OF TRAINING

The previous section looks at the training from the viewpoints of the participants and service providers. This section of the reports looks at the merits and weaknesses of additional aspects of the training.

How do the women's caucuses and the task team function?

In this sub-section we look at whether the relationships described earlier have strengthened or weakened the implementation of the WEU's training projects; what each party brings to the relationship; what the strengths and weaknesses of the relationships are; and what consequences the partnership approach has for delivery.

From the beginning, the women's caucuses were seen as central to the functioning of the WEU. As the coordinator explained:

The women's caucuses were set up right from the beginning at the conceptualisation stage. Because we had to have a focal point for each province.

In practice, the status and strength of the women's caucus within their respective legislatures differ from province to province. This is because not all the women's caucuses have resources with which to function and to implement the training programme of the WEU, as their legislatures have not afforded them full committee status. In practical terms, this means that the caucuses have to function without a formal budget allocated to the programme of activities the committees could undertake, and without administrative support to organize activities. These differences in status and recognition contribute to differences in level of uptake of the WEU's training activities, although they are not the only causes of differences in uptake.

Although the WEU provides some support, it can be argued that the lack of formal assistance in some of the procedures of securing funds from the WEU may discourage the weaker

caucuses from applying for funding from the WEU and undertaking training. Reportedly, it is the caucuses with the best administrative and financial support that have shown good uptake of the WEU training programme. This is true, for example, for the Eastern Cape and Limpopo.

Other factors affecting the women's caucus, some partly related to recognition within the legislature, are the availability of time for the co-ordination of WEU programmes and the general interest in such an initiative. Parliamentarians complain repeatedly about time constraints and, as such, it is more difficult to get them interested in projects outside of their immediate job requirements. The "add-on" time required for the WEU training programme may be seen as burdensome.

The burdens may be perceived as particularly heavy by the caucus chairs. The responsibility assigned to the women's caucus chairs to report to the WEU about member responses to training workshops is testimony of this. Very few women's caucus chairs actually fulfill that responsibility. Where the administrative support is available, parliamentarians pass on the task of report writing. In the Eastern Cape, most of the proposals submitted to the WEU are compiled by the EUPSP liaison officer and other staff assigned to the women's caucus there. This is also true for KwaZulu-Natal, where after the official communication has occurred with the WEU, the EU liaison officer undertakes all the logistical planning of the training events, right through to report writing and ensuring that there is an attendance list. In some provinces, it is administrative staff members who do much of the communication with the WEU.

The EU officers are not consistent in their reporting to the WEU, nor are the women's caucus chairs. This results in weak documentation of WEU activities. The quality of the women's caucus reports, proposals for training, and service provider reports vary widely. This compromises the quality of the documentation held by the WEU, with possible negative implications for the quality of its services, as it cannot adequately reflect on what has happened in the past. The weaknesses in documentation obviously also influenced what was available for the evaluation team. It must be acknowledge, however, that the documentation weaknesses are not confined to reports from the provinces. One of our interviewees commented on this problem in reporting her difficulty in obtaining document on which to base planning for her work with the Unit.

While caucus chairs are burdened with some responsibilities in terms of the WEU, they also benefit in some concrete ways from the role they play in the programme. In particular, most seem to place great value on the opportunity to travel, as well as on the personal status they gain.

From the interviews and workshop with caucus chairs, it seems that they value the inter-provincial meetings they attend as highly, if not more so, than the trainings in their province.

In the SWOT analysis, “networking” came up repeatedly in various forms as a strength of the unit, while training was not emphasized much.

One aspect of the networking that appears to be particularly attractive to the caucus chairs is traveling outside their home bases. Indeed, when making recommendations for the future, the idea of study tours and travel came up repeatedly. The exact purpose of the proposed tours was not always clear. Suggested destinations included countries such as Canada, which will have limited lessons for the immediate tasks of parliamentarians who state their expressed need as delivering to their rural constituencies.

Of concern is the extent to which the benefits from these central meetings of the chairpersons are fed back to ordinary members. Some women’s caucus chairs acknowledge that they have not been able to report back consistently to their caucuses on the inter-provincial meetings that AWEPA and WEU host. A number of ordinary parliamentarians said they did not know what the WEU was. One MPL said she had always associated the WEU as a project that the caucus chair attends, she did not think it had anything to do with the women’s caucus itself. Another was confused by it, she was not sure if it was the EUPSP or the WEU. The confusion extended to one of the caucus chairs, who in her interview with the evaluators mixed up AWEPA, WEU and the EUPSP.

The EU liaison officers and the women’s caucus chairs provide an entry point for the WEU to implement its training programme. However, given the challenges that these two individuals face within the legislature, the task of co-ordination may be onerous in some cases. EUPSP liaison officers are assigned the responsibility of co-ordinating the EUPSP programme within each legislature. Many probably see tasks in respect of the WEU as additional burdens on top of their “ordinary” EUPSP work. Given the perceived lower status of the WEU, they will show varying degrees of commitment. It may be easier to overlook the WEU because it is not present in the legislatures. Further, it is not very visible to parliamentarians or staff of the legislature. While the EUPSP has posters around parliament, the WEU has none, and while the EUPSP produces a bi-monthly news journal, the WEU does not.

Timing

The EUPSP, the WEU and the legislatures, all have to compete for time to train parliamentarians. Training that is provided by the legislature is inserted on the parliamentary timetable. Some of the training occurs during recess or on Fridays. Many parliamentarians see it as eating into time they would prefer to allocate to constituency or party-political work. The EUPSP programme is organized by the training managers within the legislatures, who have to search for time for the training.

Although the WEU has the assistance of the EUPSP liaison officers, it must co-ordinate its training from a single office, and with no official time within the legislature time-table. Thus,

finding and securing time for WEU training with women parliamentarians is always a challenge. This is compounded by the fact that the WEU, except in the case of Gauteng, is co-ordinating its training from a remote office.

The WEU training occurs when the members can give up their spare time, or can slot it during the parliamentary session. Given their gendered responsibilities, it is probably even more difficult to secure free time from women parliamentarians than from men. The result is that when the training dates are finally set, some members do not make it, and those that do usually arrive late and want to leave early.

In practice, workshops that are planned for two days usually take half of that, since members arrive late and delay the commencement of the training. On the second day, members often request to leave early. Workshops that are planned for a single day usually, in effect, run only over a half-day. The planned programme may be cut by more than four hours.

Training facilitators complain about having to adapt their planned programmes due to time constraints. They note that this results in a less-than-optimal learning session. Sections that were planned in the training sometimes are not covered. Most reports suggest follow up training to cover what was planned to be covered. For example, one recommended that “another workshop should be held, due to time constraints”. A second reported that “a follow up of the session was proposed in order to complete the training as it was difficult to adequately cover the topics and give them sufficient depth”. Parliamentarians also complain of being rushed through workshop activities, but nevertheless continue to arrive late and leave early.

Training fatigue?

Some of the parliamentarians interviewed were confused about what training they had attended, whom it was funded by and for what purpose. As noted, this was also found to be the case in the EUPSP evaluation (HSRC et al, 2002). This poor memory raises questions as to the implications for the efficacy of the training in transferring skills and knowledge to the parliamentarians. Is it the quality of the training that is at fault, or is there simply too much training, or is there too little interest from the parliamentarians?

Communication

The interview with the KwaZulu-Natal EU liaison officer highlighted some of the challenges faced in organizing WEU training. Communication between the Unit and the liaison officer usually happens when there is a training activity being planned for the KZN legislature. Any training event planned for the legislature reaches the women's caucus first. After this discussion, the EU liaison officer will be contacted to deal with the logistics. The liaison officer complains that this system of communication isolates her, and that she never feels like she is part of the process. She compares this with her experience of communication with the EU head office:

The WEU communicates directly with the MPLs. So I'm left behind. We have constant communication with the EU office, we always find out what is happening. The EU is constant in doing legislature visits. The only time I get to communicate with the WEU is when there is training.

The officer also feels that the WEU is not visible within the legislature and that it deals with a weak committee within the legislature in the form of the women's caucus. She notes that people do not understand what the WEU is about. She suggests that the Unit may be invisible because it is “clouded” by the EU. This is complicated by the fact that, in her understanding, the WEU falls within the EU structure. Further, the EUPSP “sits on the Speakers’ Forum”, while this is not the case for the WEU.

The EUPSP is more visible in the legislatures than the WEU is. The EUPSP is afforded space and time in the Speakers’ Forum. It appears that the EUPSP has been afforded more “clout” in the legislatures than the WEU. More than one person remarked that the separation of the WEU from the EUPSP resulted in the isolation of the WEU from the broader capacity building process. This may be one of the reasons why the EUPSP is more visible in the legislatures.

NEEDS AND COMPETENCY ANALYSES

The needs analysis that the WEU commissioned in 1998 was a good first step towards planning its key intervention areas. However, parliamentarians work in a continually changing environment, and their competencies and skills thus need to keep developing in order to keep up with new challenges. Therefore, ongoing assessment of women parliamentarians' needs and competencies is necessary. A formal, systematic and consistent assessment would allow the WEU to refine its intervention areas, and thus more adequately assist women parliamentarians.

It has emerged from the evaluation that there are different perceptions and emphasis in what MPLs want to do, and how they want to be assisted. The needs and demands clearly vary across provinces. A comparison of what we heard from the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal illustrate the extent of the differences in expressed needs. The interviews suggested that women in the Eastern Cape are asking for systemic and accredited training. They have submitted elaborate proposals for this which the WEU has turned down on the basis of expense. As evaluators, we noted that the proposed training did not seem to cover gender issues at all. Many women parliamentarians in KwaZulu-Natal, on the other hand, are particularly active in community initiatives to empower women. Thus while the Eastern Cape women are pushing for accreditation, women in KwaZulu-Natal are seeking funding to assist them to assist rural women's projects.

Part of the motivation for the Eastern Cape proposal is that parliamentarians are keen to obtain accreditation for the training they attend. Most of the caucus chairs who heard about the Eastern Cape proposal at the mid-April meeting in Johannesburg took up the idea of accreditation with enthusiasm.

At its simplest, the demand for accreditation could be satisfied by handing out certificates to participants after each training event. These certificates would be attendance certificates only, and would be of minimal real value. Proper accreditation would involve ensuring that service providers were registered with and accredited under the National Qualifications Framework. This would exclude a large number of current and potential training providers. Proper accreditation would require that participants be assessed in some way, i.e. that there be a test at the end of the training. It would require that there be very much more training than there is now. At the tertiary level, for example, a learner can only be accredited for a meaningful 'block' of learning when she has completed 1 000 hours of training. Most WEU training events are six hours at most, and there are many six hours in 1 000!

At the meeting of women's caucus chairs, there was a demand – perhaps across provinces – for training that parliamentarians can use once they leave parliament. There is an expectation that the WEU should give them skills for jobs they might do once they are no longer MPLs.

As evaluators, we do not think this is an appropriate function for the WEU. We do not think that the WEU's funders provided money for this purpose. We note this demand, though, to emphasise that, while stressing diverse needs and demands, we do not think that all are equally "worthy" of being addressed by the WEU.

Nevertheless, there is a clear need to understand the nuances in the training needs (and demands) of women parliamentarians. These nuances present a challenge in achieving uniformity and consistency across provinces. However, difference does not necessarily exclude standardisation. It should be possible to find different ways of ensuring "equity" between the provinces without insisting that all have identical training.

TRAINING DIFFERENTIATION

Parliamentarians complained about the lack of differentiation in the training presented by the WEU in terms of levels. This issue also emerged from other evaluations of training for parliamentarians.

Currently the training provided by the WEU is not differentiated according to the levels of understanding and experience that parliamentarians have. The level at which training is pitched is based on the discretion of the service provider. Thus, the levels vary from workshop to workshop.

Overall, there is a perception that the training that the WEU facilitates is elementary, and targeted at members who have no or very basic knowledge on the training topic. This was put forward as one reason why some members do not attend the training workshops. On the other hand, some members feel exasperated when attending workshops that do not take into account that they may not have sufficient knowledge to follow the workshop activities.

Differentiation in training provision according to elementary and advanced levels would require that the proposed level of each workshop is explained to members so that those at the appropriate level attend. Some members might find such differentiation offensive, and the WEU and women's caucuses would need to take this into consideration.

Differentiating by level would mean that institutions such as the WEU could provide more specialised training programmes. As noted, it has been argued that the inability of training institutions to engage the national parliament in their training programmes, is because members of the national parliament see no need for the training offered. Specialised training might assist in attracting some national parliament members to WEU training.

Provision of more specialised training would be facilitated if the WEU had a systemic list of training service providers, so that it could source providers with the required level of specialisation. At present, the co-ordinating system of the WEU requires that provinces identify their own service providers. This system may be advantageous in that it allows the provinces to have maximum input in meeting their own training needs. However, the disadvantage is that, firstly, the WEU is not actively engaged in discovering what service providers are on offer, what they can and cannot provide, and what the competition is. It also means that the WEU does not maintain a systemic database of service providers. The WEU thus forgoes the opportunity to solicit service providers that can deliver the best services.

The WEU is also somewhat vulnerable where it relies on the EU liaison officer to select a service provider, as officers may be more familiar with the objectives of the EUPSP than those of the WEU. This bias seemed to occur with the budgetary training in Mpumalanga,

where the presenter had no background in gender at all. Secondly, judging from the reported time constraints, relying on either the liaison officer or other non-WEU staff may mean that there is not much time spent on finding the best possible service provider.

Sector-specific training

To date, virtually none of the WEU training has focused on sector-specific issues, such as health, education, or welfare. Yet it is as members of the various portfolio committees that members perform some of their most important functions of oversight of policy, legislation and budgets. It is also in relation to sectoral issues that gender issues become more concrete, and more directly relevant to the lives of the women citizens whose issues the parliamentarians hope to address. MPLs in most provinces have now received general training in gender issues and mainstreaming gender. They would now, we think, benefit from more specific help in how to take this forward in the portfolios for which they are responsible.

One way of doing so would be for the WEU to bring together women parliamentarians who serve on a particular portfolio committee from across all the provinces to attend workshops on a gender-sensitive approach to policy, legislation and budgets within that portfolio. For example, the parliamentarians working in agriculture from all around the country could come together to look at the position of women and men in agriculture and the rural areas, how the policies and laws around land and agriculture address inequalities, and what problems there are with implementation that make it more difficult to achieve gender equality. The same could be done in respect of social welfare, health, education, and other portfolios.

The advantage of a sectoral approach is that the facilitator would be able to get into the nitty-gritty of what gender-sensitivity means in each sector, instead of talking about gender mainstreaming in general. The WEU would also be able to use training service providers who have expertise in that particular sector. The parliamentarians should end up with a much more practical sense of what they need to go back and do in their legislatures. They will also have the opportunity to share different practical experiences in their area of work. As a side-benefit, this approach would mean that it is not only the caucus chairs who benefit from the travel and exposure elements of WEU.

ADDRESSING CORE TRAINING ISSUES

The WEU's documentation on the training it has facilitated is limited on a number of aspects which are important for an education and training organisation. The WEU does not have a systematised database of service providers. The existing documentation of training activities details only the title of the training, the name of the service provider, the date and the province in which it took place. There is no centralized record of how many parliamentarians attended each event. There is no documentation on the content and method and results of the training, besides the generally weak and inconsistent service provider reports. Furthermore, there is no documentation that compares various service providers according to, for example, the content of their training, their training method, their expected or intended outcomes, and the experience that the service providers may have had conducting their training. The WEU does not have a formalised method of evaluating the training that it has facilitated. This means that the results of the training events are not captured. Where there are evaluations they are inconsistent and too vague to provide the basis for useful conclusions. The WEU has not made any concerted efforts to build up a resource of training materials.

The move towards providing specialised training would require more attention to some of these core training issues. In particular, it would be facilitated by the establishment of a database of trainers, organised according to the content of their training, their intended outcomes, methods of training, experience, and cost of training. One would also want to know whether the trainers have a background in gender, and what their experience of legislatures is. More systematic record-keeping on the content and quality of training would improve the WEU's knowledge of the training field. The WEU would be better placed to identify changes and trends. Compiling the proposals that the Unit has received through its three-quote system could begin the process.

From its side, the WEU would need to give the training providers more information on the varying levels of skills that members have. After the training event, systematic evaluation would allow the WEU to keep track of the effectiveness of training, and manage the shortfalls. Follow-up some time after the training would allow the unit to monitor the impact of the courses and, therefore, its own progress in achieving its objectives.

Several informants also suggested, either implicitly or explicitly, that the impact of training would be improved by follow-up with participants. One suggested that having a different facilitator each time was difficult for both the facilitator and the participants. Another lamented the lack of follow-up as follows:

It's fine to do workshops, but some times you just need to get down and do the work with people in the provinces. At the end of the day half the recommendations are not taken forward. Nobody's following through.

Some examples were provided of the way in which the content and the manner in which the training is organised could be improved so as to make implementation of the learned skills more likely. For example, one person suggested that the WEU could make resources available to enable gender analysis. This could be linked to the training that members receive in legislative and policy analysis. The WEU, perhaps through the facilitators, could also provide follow-up tasks that utilise the tools gained in the training. This would enable members to apply the skills and knowledge gained from the training more concretely. It would mean that members would be less inclined to forget the training that they received. But it would place an extra function on the WEU in that it would need to ensure that the follow-up was facilitated and monitored.

COMPLEMENTARY PROGRAMMES TO TRAINING

The WEU was conceptualised as supporting women parliamentarians through training. Training on its own, however, can have limited impact. What additional support role could the WEU play for women parliamentarians?

One support activity commented upon by several informants was the August 2001 workshop held in Durban. Informants commented, in particular, on the fact that top office-bearers of the legislatures were invited to attend. One of the top office-bearers was not herself able to attend, but read the report and commented that she was “heartened” by the training that was given to speakers:

That was very important – to have them on board in terms of understanding the reasons for women’s empowerment. If you don’t have on board the people at the highest level in terms of transforming the institution, and if there is no political will at that level, then you have no hope.

Another informant was also impressed by the initiative, but noted that only three speakers had attended. The first informant noted that training alone is not enough. There must:

Also [be] a mechanism to follow up at the institutions. There must be a way that each of the Speakers is encouraged to apply the knowledge in terms of their responsibilities and everyday challenges.

The evaluation revealed a number of further suggestions about how the WEU could extend its programmes outside training. Many interviewees, including members, felt that the WEU should complement its training programme with other programmes related to training, such as advocacy support in matters of gender. One person expressed it as follows: “The WEU must support the caucuses, not just do training.”

Members suggested various support activities that the WEU could undertake. These varied from the WEU providing assistance in community development skills, to the WEU facilitating training that parliamentarians could use when they leave the legislature, through to the WEU facilitating training for staff as well as parliamentarians, as otherwise one would not be able to draw up or implement a gender-sensitive budget.

Some of these suggestions fall outside the current scope of the WEU’s mandate. They do, however, emphasise the point that training alone cannot achieve the objectives of the Unit.

OTHER SIMILAR PROGRAMMES

The Provincial Parliamentary Programme (PPP) is a non-governmental organisation in KwaZulu-Natal that, alongside training, has provided advocacy support and research support to the legislature and those who interact with it. The PPP has done legislative training in the KwaZulu-Natal legislature at the request of the legislature. It has also provided training for the Mpumalanga legislature through the EUPSP. The latter training was on public participation mechanisms and the role of constituency offices. In general, however, the PPP has placed a lot of emphasis on gender issues in its activities.

The PPP has a relationship with the provincial office of the CGE. Through this relationship, the programme facilitated one workshop on the structures and processes of government and opportunities to influence these, and a second on developing effective advocacy strategies to engage with government, identifying issues for advocacy and building a plan of action.

The PPP also monitors national and provincial policy and legislative processes. The PPP has forged relationships with key portfolio and standing committees in the provincial legislature and attends their meetings. This programme also monitors the implementation of policy and legislation. Arguably these are some of the areas that the WEU could provide support in. The task would, of course, be complicated by the fact that the WEU is meant to offer support to all legislatures.

Research and WEU

Although it was decided in the second agreement with SIDA that the WEU would hire a full-time researcher, this did not happen. The co-ordinator explains that the task team decided that research would occur on a needs-basis. This decision illustrates the fact that, where considered necessary, the WEU broke part of the agreement with SIDA, and specified in the logical framework. The decision was explained by the argument that if the WEU could forge strong relationships with organisations that were undertaking research in its area of interest, the WEU did not itself have to conduct research, as they could use the information generated by others.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the evaluation revealed that a range of stakeholders were pleased with what the WEU represented and what it had done. One outsider who has worked closely with the Unit expressed the general view as follows:

My sense was that there's a lot of respect for the WEU not based on the training, just the fact that they're there and this is the unit that can take care of their needs.

This same observer went on to say that whether the WEU does, in fact, take care of women's parliamentarians' needs "is another story". The evaluation suggests that often, when the WEU has not delivered as much as originally hoped, this is due to external factors. In particular, the highly political situation of the legislatures, and party in-fighting, often make delivery difficult. Further, parliamentarians' attendance at workshops is not as good as it could be. Parliamentarians themselves attribute the problems to their overload of work. Overall, the WEU has done well in meeting the terms of the agreement and the framework agreed upon with SIDA. In most provinces, the WEU is well on its way to having provided training on all the identified topics. In some provinces, the WEU has achieved more than this. Among virtually all informants there was agreement that the Unit is serving an important and necessary function.

On the financial side we heard of no problems at all. This is important, as this is an area where there appear to have been problems in the period of the earlier agreement with SIDA. The patterns in respect of rejection of proposals from provinces suggest that financial issues are taken seriously in that it is largely the highly priced proposals which are rejected. From the side of both the legislatures and service providers, we heard no complaints at all about delays or difficulties in payment. This is unusual and commendable for an initiative of this kind.

The evaluation did not focus on internal issues such as administration. Instead, we were interested in delivery – in what the WEU achieved. The way in which administration is done does, however, impact on delivery. In this respect, we did note some weaknesses. In particular, when we requested information and reports from the WEU, the Unit was not always easily able to give us full information or a full set of reports. Further, as discussed above, we feel that the Unit could give more attention to recording further details of training and training providers.

The report discusses in some detail the different structures involved in the WEU's activities. As discussed, the hierarchical nature of the legislatures, and the multitude of different structures, make it a difficult arena in which to operate. The WEU's structure has been well thought out to address the difficulties. Inevitably, however, the Unit comes up against obstacles. One serious obstacle is the scarcity of time to devote attention to the WEU, especially on the part of the more senior decision-makers. Another is the autonomy of the legislatures. So, for example, task team members are given responsibility for different provinces, but have to carry out their assigned task of facilitating WEU activities through persuasion rather than "command" as they have no formal power over the different legislatures. Ultimately, the WEU and task team can do little if a particular legislature is not interested in accessing funds.

Notwithstanding the difficulties, the WEU has achieved much. Nevertheless, there are some areas in which the WEU could improve its performance. In particular, it seems that not

enough attention has been paid to what training entails. The WEU had focused on the financial and logistical aspects of its task, but paid less attention to the pedagogical aspects. Where training providers have been good, they might have been able to make up for some of this deficiency. But even a good training provider will not deliver their best if they are not provided with sufficient information as to what is expected and a conducive environment. We hope that this evaluation will assist the WEU to address this aspect of its operation.

Appendix 1

Diagram of National Gender Machinery

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APPENDIX 3

CASE INTERVIEWS

Task Team:

1. Koti Nyama, WEU Chairperson and Deputy Speaker Limpopo Province (ANC)
2. Baleka Mbete, Deputy Speaker National parliament (ANC)
3. Mxolisi Dukwana, Deputy Speaker Free State Province (ANC)

Women's caucus chairpersons

1. Peggy Nkonyeni, KwaZulu Natal (ANC)
2. Joyce Masilo, North West (ANC)
3. Pinky Kekana, Limpopo (ANC)
4. Peggy Hollander, Northern Cape (ANC)
5. Alta Roussouw, Western Cape (NNP)
6. Ntombomzi Phenduka, Western Cape (ANC)
7. Faith Mazibuko, Gauteng (ANC)
8. Nomsa Jajula, Eastern Cape (ANC)

Not present at the meeting

1. Phumzile Ngwenya Mpumalanga (ANC)

Members of the Provincial Legislatures

1. Maria Xulu, KwaZulu-Natal (IFP)
2. Shamim Thakur-Rajbansi, KwaZulu-Natal (MF)
3. Miriam Ka-Nkosi-Shandu, KwaZulu-Natal (IFP)
4. Belinda Scott, KwaZulu-Natal (DP)
5. Zanele Ludidi, KwaZulu-Natal (ANC)
6. Dorothy Rabodibe, Gauteng (ANC)
7. Mary Madla-Magubane, Gauteng (ANC)
8. Nic Isaacs, Western Cape (NNP)
9. Lizzy Phike, Western Cape (ANC)

Members of the National parliament:

10. Ulsha Roopnarain (IFP)
11. Bernice Sigaba-Sono (DP)

Service Providers

1. Phelele Tengen, University of Natal

2. Coetzee Bester, PAMODZI
3. Jolene Adams, Institute for Democracy in South Africa

EUPSP liaison officers

1. Charmaine Estement, Eastern Cape
2. Nobom Mdube, KwaZulu-Natal
3. Brum Cloete, Mpumalanga

Other

1. Lynne Brown, ex-WEU task team member
2. Naledi Pandor, chairperson of National council of provinces
3. Janine Hicks, PPP
4. Christine Leibach, AWEPA
5. Laurie Watson, ex-SIDA
6. Rosieda Shabodien, ex-GAP Director